THE PANOPLIST,

AND

MISSIONARY MAGAZINE UNITED.

No. 37. JUNE 1808. No. 1. Vol. IV.

BIOGRAPHY.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF PROFESSOR GELLERT.

From the Christian Observer.

Christian F. Gellert, the third among thirteen children, was born at Haynichen, in Saxony, in 1715. His father was second minister of the place; fulfilled the duties of his charge for fifty years with exemplary zeal and fidelity: and died Dean at the age of seventy-five. His mother, by her precepts, impressed on the mind of her children the principles of piety; and by her example, conducted them to the practice of active virtue. She lived to see her eldest son, Frederic, principal commissary of the posts in Saxony; and her youngest, inspector of the mines at Frieburg.

Christian Gellert received his first education at a public school at Meissen, where his friendship commenced with Gartner and Rabener, a friendship which much contributed to the happiness of his future life. At the age of eleven he was employed in copying a multitude of documents, contracts, and judicial acts; an exercise which, in a less ardent mind, might have stifled the poetic spirit which soon burst forth in Gellert. In his thirteenth year he wrote a poem on his father's birth day, which must have possessed considerable merit, as many could recite it by memory, and preferred it to his other compositions.

Gellert went in 1734 to Leipsick, and studied there four years, when his father was obliged to recall him from inability to support the expence of maintaining him at the university. On his return home he began to preach; and his first attempt, which was very inauspicious, he thus relates in his memoirs.

"It was at the age of fifteen, and in my native town, that I made the first essay of my eloquence. One of the citizens had requested me to be godfather to his child, which child died a few days after. I undertook his funeral sermon, though my father agreed rather unwillingly to my so doing. The child was to be buried at noon; at eight in the morning I began to compose my discourse, which was not completed till very late, I

lost what time remained in composing an epitaph, and had but one hour to fix what I had just written in my memory. However, I boldly entered the church, and began my discourse with much solemnity, and attained nearly to the third sentence. Suddenly my ideas became confused, and the presumptuous orator found himself in a state of anxiety, from which it was difficult for him to recover. At length I had recourse to my papers, written in the form of a deed, on one large sheet, I unrolled it slowly before the eyes of my audience, who were as much disturbed as myself; I placed it in my hat and continued my discourse with tolerable boldness.—Ardent youth! let my example teach thee to conduct thyself with more prudence. I presumed too much upon myself, I was punished for it, and I frequently afterwards deplored my foolish temerity: be wiser than I was!"

It is pleasing thus to see a man profit by his errors, and even disclose them for the benefit of others; as the mariner marks in his chart the fatal sands on which his vessel struck. From this incident Gellert conceived a timidity, which he was never able to overcome, and which, together with bad health, weak lungs, and a memory not very firm, prevented him from becoming that ornament to the pulpit, which his early attempts promised, and engaged him to employ his talents in a different line.

His limited circumstances did not allow him to devote his whole time to the cultivation of his own talents. In 1739 he undertook the care of several pupils; and, zealous in the discharge of this important duty, he trusted not to his own strength; he prayed for superior assistance. On the right employment of the Sabbath he justly laid particular stress; he considered it as "an indispensable means, and the most useful of all, for quickening our progress in religion and piety;" he thought that "on our mode of employing the Sabbath," depended "the use we made of the week."

"For on that day, (he would say,) to withdraw ourselves from all earthly occupations, to make a serious examination of our hearts, to raise them to heaven, to nourish them with the truths founded on faith, is to fortify them for the whole week, to prepare ourselves for a faithful discharge of the duties of our calling. Amidst the tumults of the world, and the occupations of life, we too easily lose the sentiment of our weakness and misery, if we do not set apart a certain portion of time for meditating on our insufficiency, and on the power and goodness of God; on our nothingness, and on his greatness. The better your dispositions, the more active your zeal in discharging your duties, the more secure you may think your progress in virtue, the more reason you will have to fear the surprises of spiritual pride. Consecrate, therefore, the Lord's Day to acts of humility. Impress your heart deeply with the meditation of this great truth: that your existence, your felicity or your misery, your faith, your piety, are entirely and wholly dependent on the Supreme Being. Entertain a deep sense of the goodness of God, and of your own weakness. Awaken your mind to the sense of God's mercies; enjoy the conversation of your pious friends, rejoice in the felicity

which is their portion, in the beauties and in the wonders of nature."

This testimony from Gellert, whose assiduity in the discharge of the arduous duties of his station was unremitting, is surely a sufficient answer to those who plead the toils of the week as an apology for the dissipation in which they spend that day which God has claimed for himself. If to adore their Creator is burthensome; if to hold communion with their Redeemer, and gratefully to contemplate the wonders of his love is not a delightful employment: if a sense of their own insufficiency does not lead them to implore the assistance of the Holy Spirit; it is a sure proof that their hearts are not right before God; and no other argument is wanting to shew how necessary it is that they should diligently use all the appointed means of grace, and thankfully acknowledge the wisdom and goodness of God in having set apart one day in seven for peculiar attention to our spiritual concerns.

To the opinion of Gellert we may add the testimony of one, eminent for his profound knowledge of English law, and still more eminent for his unshaken integrity and exalted piety.

"God Almighty," says Sir Matthew Hale, "is the Lord of our time, and lends it to us, and, as it is but just we should consecrate this part (the Sabbath) of that time to him, so I have found, by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observation of the duty of this day hath ever joined to it a blessing upon the rest of my time, and the week that hath been so begun hath been blessed and prosperous to me; and, on the other side, when I have been negligent of the duties of this day, the rest of the week hath been unsuccessful and unhappy to my own secular employments; so that I could easily make an estimate of my successes in my secular employments the week following, by the manner of my passing this day: and this I do not write lightly or inconsiderately, but upon a long and sound observation and experience."*

In 1741 Gellert having conducted his nephew, to whom he had for some time been tutor, to the University of Leipsick, there continued to instruct him, and undertook the education of some other pupils. Soon after his return to Leipsick, a periodical work was commenced, called, "Amusements of the Heart and Understanding," in which Gellert "inserted many tales and fables, some didactic poems, and several discourses in prose."

"Those," says his biographer, "were perused with eagerness, they were read over and over, and learned by heart. The easy and natural style of his narrations, perfectly simple and unaffected, the sweetness and amenity of his verses, the natural expression of a young poet seeking to please his readers, to instruct and to make them better, who was playful without offence, whose laughter was never tinged with bitterness, but whose smiles were those of friendship or compassion; all these qualities were so attractive that from month to month the public taste for his works became more lively and more general."

But Gellert's exertions were not confined to literary objects; he was ready to embrace every

* Directions touching the keeping of the Lord's Day, to his children.

opportunity of reclaiming a fellow-creature from his sins. His biographer has preserved a very interesting account of the assiduity, tenderness, and judgment, with which Gellert attended, during a severe illness, a young man, who had run into every excess of profligacy and profaneness. His pious efforts were blessed with success. The young man did not recover; but Gellert had the satisfaction of seeing that his death was that of a true penitent.

In 1745—6, Gellert took his degree in the belles lettres, and thereby acquired a right of giving public lectures. On this occasion he published a dissertation on fabulous poetry, and the principal fabulists. The next twelve years of his life, it seems, produced his fables; some dramatic pieces, written with a view to reform the theatre; a romance, called the Swedish Countess, calculated to prove that this species of composition may be employed to amend, instead of corrupting the heart; Consolations to Valetudinarians; Moral Poems; Letters, and a Treatise on the Epistolary Style, Didactic Poems; Sacred Songs and Hymns.

The character of his fables is thus summed up by his biographer.—"The choice of subjects, the moral, the style, all please, all do honour to the judgment, the understanding, and the heart of the poet." And in proof of the effect which they produced among his countrymen, the following interesting anecdote is related:

"In the beginning of one winter he saw a Saxon peasant drive up to his door a cart loaded with fire wood, who demanded of him himself, whether he was not the gentleman who composed such fine tales? On the answer he received, the peasant, joy sparkling in his eyes, with many excuses for the liberty he took, made Gellert a present of the contents of his cart, as a feeble mark of his gratitude for the pleasure he had received from reading his tales."

When writing his sacred songs, "he never set himself" observes the biographer, "to this employment without a serious preparation and without having his heart previously filled with the sentiment he wished to express." They were eagerly received by all the friends of religion, and even by Roman Catholics, among whom Gellert's writings were exempted from the common sentence of exclusion passed upon heretical works.

Meanwhile this amiable man suffered greatly in his health. He was attacked in 1762 by an hypochondriac affection, and this was greatly increased, when the few friends of kindred minds, (Clopstock, Gärtner, Räbener, and Adolphus Schlegel,) by whose society he had been enlivened, quitted Leipsick, and were dispersed throughout Germany.

This severe affliction, however, did not diminish his exertions: even the works which he published were merely the occupation of his leisure hours; he devoted the greatest part of his time to the instruction and improvement of the academical youth. He taught belles lettres to his disciples, explained to them the rules of poetry and eloquence, and exercised them in composing according to these rules."

"These lessons were universally admired; scholars of every rank, especially the young nobility of various countries, who

studied at Leipsick, ran eagerly to hear Gellert."

In 1751 he obtained, together with a pension, the appointment of professor extraordinary in philosophy, and began to give public lectures in poetry and eloquence to a very numerous audience. In these he was careful to "inspire his pupils no less with the love of virtue, than of the sciences." Nor did he confine himself to public instructions, all had free access to him; and, "whilst with all the marks of the tenderest interest, he recommended to them piety and virtue, as the true road to happiness, his own example and the purity of his manners, added the greatest weight to his exhortations." Thus did this excellent man carry religion into every part of his life and conduct; it was his constant companion, his guide and the source of all his comforts.

His hypochondriac affection rendered his life a continued series of suffering: it baffled the art of medicine, and was but little relieved by the baths of Lanchstradt and Carlsbadt, which he used in 1753 and 1754. He sought for consolation in religion, and though he did not succeed in overcoming the horrors of imagination, we have no doubt that he thereby diminished their power. On the subject of Gellert's habitual melancholy, the biographer makes a judicious reflection.

"Many people in reading the life of Gellert, have been painfully affected by the idea of the almost incredible sufferings and melancholy, experienced by this man, who was so pious, and so good, who chiefly delighted in glorifying and imitating the author of his being, by spreading happiness around him. But if Gellert had been less an object of compassion, he would certainly have been less great, less admired, and of course less useful."

We may add, that, though this world is a place of trial rather than of recompense, the sufferings of Gellert were, in some degree, counterbalanced and alleviated by the numerous testimonies of gratitude which he received from those whom his writings had brought back to the path of duty. Many expressed their thanks in person; many by letter; many by handsome presents. A Silesian gentleman (the Baron de Craussen) offered him a very considerable pension; and, when Gellert declined, bestowed it on his mother.

As Gellert advanced in years he found his imagination cool; and, abandoning the Muses, resolved to compose a course of moral lectures. These added much to his celebrity; his audience consisted often of four hundred persons; sometimes of more. Nor was he less useful by his familiar and friendly intercourse, with his pupils, and by his advice to numerous correspondents, than by his public lectures. The confidence reposed in him was indeed most extraordinary. "Fathers asked him for directions in regard to the education of their sons; mothers wished to receive his instructions as to the mode of forming the hearts and understandings of their daughters, and frequently consulted him concerning the offers of marriage which were made for them; young men requested him to advise them on their studies; to him many persons who had doubts concerning religion, addressed themselves

to have them cleared up; and frequently people of the world asked his advice how to resist the temptations to which they were exposed." To persons of every station of life his writings were useful; and by all ranks his character was respected and beloved.

As yet Gellert held no other situation in the university than that of professor extraordinary, no chair of professor in ordinary having become vacant in the faculty to which he belonged. Mr. Mitchell, English envoy to the court, solicited an increase of his emoluments, but in a letter to Count Bruhl, Gellert strongly opposed this endeavour "to procure me," as he expressed it, "a pension in such distressing times, in which our country suffers so much misery." The chair of professor in ordinary becoming vacant by the death of Dr. Muller in 1761, was offered to Gellert; but he positively declined it from the most laudable motive; he felt, that in his infirm state of health, he was unequal to the duties of the situation. "His wants," observes the biographer, "were few, because he was very moderate in all his desires, and that he neither sought the conveniences nor amusements, which others consider as necessary. He confided in Divine Providence." In fact, scarcely a year passed in which he did not receive very considerable presents by the post: and on the death of M. de Mascow, his pension of four hundred and eighty-five crowns was transferred to the reluctant Gellert. This increased revenue supplied him with those comforts which his increasing infirmities demanded; though slender as his income was till then, he had never wanted; he had even made it sufficient to relieve the necessity of a friend, or the distress of the poor."

Towards the close of Gellert's life an unhappy spirit of discord arose in the university: he alone, by exhortations and expostulations, succeeded in quelling it. Notwithstanding his mental depression, he enjoyed, by the force of religion, much inward tranquillity during the last five years of his life; and, as he perceived the slow approach of death, his diligence in benefitting others, and his zeal for their spiritual welfare, seem to have increased. "The lessons," to use the elegant language of his biographer, "which came from his lips had the charm of a fine summer's evening, at the moment when the sun sheds his last beams, and his absence deprives nature of its lustre, without taking from its beauty." He prepared his moral lessons for the press, but did not live to superintend their publication. Still his malady gained ground. He twice again, by the advice of his physicians, visited Carlsbadt. Every means, which friendship and medical skill could suggest was tried in vain. The Elector presented him with the gentlest and most safe of his horses; testifying an anxiety for his recovery worthy of the imitation of those, whose situation in life enables them to encourage talents and piety. But Gellert was not long able to use it; a painful constipation was added to his other disorders, and he expired in 1769 with the triumphant composure of a christian.

The narrative of his behaviour in his last hours is minute and extremely affecting; we should on-

ly weaken its effect by attempting to compress it: we shall therefore give it entire.

"During his last illness, a firm, but ever humble confidence in the mercy of God, through Jesus Christ, appeared to elevate him above himself; and melancholy, the constant companion of his life, did not dare follow him to the confines of eternity. He was delivered from his apprehensions, and, nevertheless, preserved a constant sense of his imperfections, and of his unworthiness in the sight of the Supreme Being. He fixed his thoughts on the beatitude to which he was approaching; and, to console his friends, distracted by the conviction that medical art tried in vain to prolong his days, he conversed with them on the glorious prospect before him.

"When Gellert had completed his temporal arrangements, mastering his weakness and his pains, he sat up, and uncovering his head, the hairs of which already begun to whiten, he pronounced aloud such fervent prayers, animated with so deep a sentiment of humility, of gratitude, and of love for his God; his looks raised to heaven expressed such a profound peace, so celestial a joy, that it seemed to his friends as if they saw the image of a holy patriarch, a Jacob on his death-bed blessing his children. He endeavoured to recal to his remembrance all the particular blessings he had received from Divine Goodness; he specifically named all those of his friends who were still alive, many of his absent disciples, and recommended them in his prayers to the Divine favour and protection. But he did not wholly confine himself to the blessings he had received; he recalled to his mind his faults, his weaknesses, and that with such a degree of humility, as produced an indelible impression on the minds of those present. This prayer was pronounced with a weak, but very intelligible voice; and the fire of devotion with which it was animated, filled their eyes with tears, and their hearts with a respect for his piety, beyond what they ever felt before.

"After having conversed and prayed for some time, he fell back on his bed, continued his meditations in silence, and thus prepared himself for the conversation of a worthy ecclesiastic in whom he had much confidence, and from whose hands he wished to receive the holy sacrament for the last time. On the entrance of this friend, the manner in which Gellert spoke to him of his death, shewed that nothing disturbed the inward calm of his mind. He was very attentive to all the words uttered by the pious minister; but nothing affected him more, nor excited in his heart a more lively sentiment of joy, than the consideration of the infinite love of the Redeemer towards mankind; and this sentiment was accompanied with the most profound respect, and the sincerest humility. When amongst the passages of scripture suited to his situation, these words taken from the history of Lazarus were pronounced, '*Lord, behold he whom thou lovest is sick*;' penetrated with the sense of this passage, 'Ah,' exclaimed he, 'might I be happy enough to be allowed to apply these words to myself!' His pastor and his friend making him sensible that the christian, who seeks salvation only in the merits

of his Saviour, may be certain he is the peculiar object of his love, he immediately applied this consoling promise to himself: Yes, I hope it, O my Saviour, I hope that thou lovest me as one of thine own.'

"The power of these sentiments so far exceeded that of his sufferings, that, in the midst of the most violent pains, no complaint fell from his lips, only he requested his friends to pray for him. One of these having asked him whether he suffered much? 'Most assuredly,' replied the pious sufferer, 'but these pains are supportable.' 'You have already endured many evils with firmness and resignation,' added his friend, 'you will still continue to suffer with Christian fortitude, that religion which has strengthened you during your life, will support you in the hour of death.' 'Alas, my dear friend,' replied Gellert 'I am a weak man, a poor sinner; pray for me that I may not yield to temptation.' Sincere as was this confession, as sincerely did he think himself certain of obtaining pardon, through the merits of the Redeemer.

"On hearing of his danger, Mr. Heyer came to Leipsick to see him; the moment Gellert perceived him, he said, '*This is a truth, and worthy to be received of all men*, that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; this, my dear friend, this is my confession of faith on my death bed. But,' continued he with visible joy, 'mercy has been extended to me; yes, God extends his mercy to me; this is what I moreover acknowledge; it is in this hope that I live, and am going to die.' He then set himself to exalting aloud, and in the most affecting manner, the infinite mercy of God.

"These pious dispositions manifested themselves particularly in his last communion; and though his illness had already reduced him to a deplorable state, he collected all his remaining strength, in order to acknowledge his faults, and make his confession of faith; and the ardent zeal with which he was animated, must have absorbed, at that moment, all his sense of suffering. He applied to himself all the promises of grace, which the deeply affected minister placed before him from the Gospel, with the utmost ardour, and with a tone of voice which announced the celestial joy with which his heart overflowed; he called on those who witnessed this act of religion to edify themselves, with him, and to celebrate the glory of the Divine mercy. He at the same time assured the minister, that he had never felt so entirely the comfort and efficacy of the evangelical promises; and that at this, more than at any other time, he felt how much those are to be pitied who refuse to seek their consolation in the Saviour's merits.

Notwithstanding the violence of his disorder, nothing could disturb the courage and serenity of his soul; and he discovered none of those marks of weakness, which are too often seen in similar circumstances, even in true Christians.

"The physicians, in the mean time, tried every thing their art could suggest, to save his life. The news of his desperate state reached the Elector: much affected by the situation of this most useful citizen, he ordered the able Demiani to go to Leipsick, and to join his endeavours with those of the university phy-

sicians, to save a life he so much valued, and desired to have an exact account of the success of their united efforts. Gellert submitted to all their experiments with admirable patience and courage; no complaint escaped him, though out of four and twenty hours he was constantly obliged to pass sixteen under the surgeon's hands. All, however, was in vain, neither the skill and assiduity of his physicians, the zeal and friendship by which they were animated, nor the kind attention of his sovereign, could arrest the departure of that life, which every one so ardently wished should be prolonged. In the midst of the violent pains attending on an inflamation of the bowels, the pious sufferer was occupied with the passion of his Saviour, who he said, had suffered infinitely more to obtain for him the pardon of his sins; and his soul was so entirely absorbed in the contemplation of this salutary death, that he appeared little alive to the sense of his own sufferings. So much strength and courage does religion communicate to the dying Christian!

"The fresh proof he received of the interest taken in him by the elector, on the arrival of the physician belonging to the court, excited his gratitude, and he loudly praised God for this consolation. 'But,' added he, as if fearful of yielding too much to the pleasure it gave him; 'let us not place our trust in princes, they cannot help us, however good they may be, and whatever desire they may have to be useful to us; my help comes from God!' When M. Demiani expressed to him the esteem and affection the prince had for him, and the alarm his illness occasioned at court, Gellert shed tears of gratitude. He fervently prayed for the prosperity of so good a sovereign, and for that of all his family. The sufferings of our Saviour being constantly in his thoughts, he compared afresh his state with that of Jesus on the cross; observing that mere subject as he was, he died honoured with the compassion of his prince, whilst the Redeemer of mankind had not even obtained justice from men. At a moment when the disorder seemed to have attained its height, he exclaimed with a sigh, 'O what sufferings!' 'But,' resumed he immediately, 'what are those sufferings in comparison of those of my Saviour! He was reviled by those about him; and I, unworthy creature, experience the good will of my prince!' Thus he intermixed acts of thanks for temporal benefits, with testimonies of gratitude for the great blessing of redemption; and thus in prayers, continually renewed, he implored without ceasing his pardon, and the completion of his salvation. His intimate friends resident at Dresden, and in particular his beloved Wagner, had hastened to see him; he consoled them with the most affecting tenderness, and required from them no other office than that they would pray for him, and help him to elevate his mind to God, when the violence of his disorder should make it impossible for him to pray himself with uninterrupted fervour. 'I find it difficult,' said he, 'to follow what is addressed to me, only repeat to me the name of Jesus; whenever I pronounce it or hear it pronounced by others, I feel myself animated with new strength, and fresh joy.' Full of

these sentiments, his deliverance drew nigh. His extenuated body decayed gradually; his soul maintained itself in that happy tranquillity arising from hope. The day preceding his death, some hours' rest gave him power to renew his prayers for his sovereign, his relations, and friends, and the disciples who had been entrusted to his care; he named them all and blessed them. His wishes in their behalf was his only return to the world he was leaving. At length he thought he felt the final approaches of death, and wished to know of his friends how much longer he might have to struggle with it. On being answered, perhaps an hour; 'God be praised,' said he, with looks of joy, and raising his hands, 'only one more hour!' Then with a still more serene countenance, he turned on his side, prayed to God in silence, and in the midst of this prayer, and those of all present, who surrounded his bed, he slept the sleep of death, on the 13th of December, 1769, at midnight."

The death of Gellert was universally lamented throughout Germany: and his brother, the superintendant of the post, survived the grief of his loss but a month.

In literature he has by some been thought superficial; but though depth of reasoning was not the peculiar excellence of his compositions, he was not defective in conclusive argumentation. His distinguishing merit, however as a writer, consists in the vivacity of his imagination, in his accurate knowledge of the human heart, in his discriminating delineation of character, in the exquisite pathos of his exhortations, and above all in the Christian piety which pervades almost every sentence.

He is described as having a most scrupulous regard for "every arrangement established in society, in the state, and among those of his own condition." In this age of indiscriminate innovation, if Gellert erred, he erred on that side where error is least pernicious. If he was too fearful of reform, he thought more correctly than those who pursue whatever wears the semblance of it with intemperate zeal.

Possessed of enlightened benevolence, he constantly endeavoured to promote both the temporal and everlasting happiness of his fellow creatures. With a slender revenue he was more liberal than many who live in affluence. "His moderation constituted his riches." On one occasion when a present was offered him, "I want for nothing," said Gellert, "and many more deserving people are in indigence; give them what you had the goodness to intend for me." In such a mind it is unnecessary to add, that friendship glowed with the purest flame.

But perhaps one of the most peculiar features in the character of Gellert was his humility. It was not that false shame, that disguised vanity, which frequently prevents men of talents from benefiting society as much as they might; it was a just consciousness of human imperfection, which led him to court the advice of his friends, to submit his compositions to their examination, and to be thankful for their censures.

We are naturally desirous to know by what means Gellert attained to such eminence in the practice of Christian virtue. His biographer has afforded us ample

information on this interesting subject. Gellert was frequent in the perusal of scripture, regular both in his private devotions, and in his *daily* attendance on public worship. During the last seventeen years of his life he kept a journal, chiefly composed of observations on his spiritual state. It contains lamentations on account of his weakness; resolutions of amendment; prayers for the pardon of sin, for divine grace, and for repose of conscience. Hence it was, that to use the words of his biographer, "his thoughts in solitude, his conversation in society, the lessons he gave his scholars, his writings, his letters, his labours, his recreations, all that he said and did, was animated by the spirit of religion."

RELIGIOUS COMMUNICATIONS.

ON THE NAME CHRISTIAN.

Continued from page 507.

HAVING in two former papers considered the meaning and origin of the name Christian; and the character of the persons to whom it was originally applied; we shall now consider

3dly, The improper application of this name to many in the present day. Perhaps no name in the English language, has been more improperly applied than that of *Christian*. In its original application, it designated persons who were born from above; *now* it is applied to all born in a nation of this world, called a Christian land. The religion of Jesus Christ is not a national religion, "My kingdom," says he, "is not of this world." Jesus takes out of the nations a people for his name, and makes them a holy nation, a peculiar people, to shew forth the praises of him who calleth them out of darkness, into his marvellous light. Instead of this name, being exclusively applied to such persons as these, it is given to many, merely because they have been baptized in the name of Christ. They have had his name called over them by a minister, and as if there was some charm or incantation in the mere sound of the name, they are called Christians. If baptism makes men Christians, it is evident there are many Christian drunkards, and Christian swearers, and Christian liars, and Christians who practice every kind of iniquity. But, are these persons Christians? Are they followers of the holy Lamb of God? If they are, pray what constitutes an infidel, or heathen? If these are Christians, the difference between heathenism and christianity does not consist in any change of heart or life, but in being washed with water. Is it possible to believe that these persons are born of God? Are they sanctified in Christ Jesus, and called to be

saints? Have they any resemblance to the holy persons addressed by the apostles, in their epistles to the churches? Such persons would do well to consider the following declarations of God. "Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man soweth that shall he also reap. For he that soweth to the flesh, shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the spirit, shall of the spirit reap life everlasting. Know yet not that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Be not be deceived: neither fornicaters, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor abusers of themselves with mankind, nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners shall inherit the kingdom of God. Let no man deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."*

Others are called Christians, because they are descended from religious parents. It is of great advantage to have religious parents, *Rom.* iii. 1—3; but, if like the Jews any say, "We have Abraham to our father" while they walk not in the steps of their father's faith, it will add to their condemnation. Although Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were our fathers, and Noah, Daniel, and Job, our brethren, mere relationship to them could avail us nothing. No man can go to hell by substitute, nor can he find admittance to heaven by the christianity of others. "Verily, verily," saith Jesus, "I say unto thee except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God," *John* iii. 3. Every true Christian is born again; but he is not born of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. The natural birth, may entitle a child to his father's name and property; but can impart no right to the name Christian. To have any title to this name, it is absolutely necessary to have the character of a Christian. Even the mother of Jesus, had no claim to his salvation, *merely* because she was his mother. "Blessed," said one, "is the womb that bare thee, and the paps that thou hast sucked:" But Jesus replied, "yea rather blessed is he that heareth the word of God, and keepeth it."

Many are called by this name, because they can talk about the doctrines of Christ. The religion of Jesus to such seems to be a matter of mere speculation; for while the most orthodox doctrine flows from their lips, their hearts seem unimpressed with its importance, and their lives at variance with it. Is it possible that any can believe that *mere talking* about religion, is well pleasing to God? Is an orthodox creed, all that is necessary to constitute a Christian? Or, do any imagine, that God has given us his word, to see how much we can speak about it, and how little of it we will obey; how orthodoxly we shall speculate, and how wickedly we shall live? You speak against infidels: but why speak against your brethren. The difference between you and professed infidels, is only in tongue: for, while you are at war with them in words, you are in league with them in practice. Consistency requires, that you either renounce your profession of christianity, or your practice of infidelity; and God commands

* *Gal.* vi. 7, 8. 1 *Cor.* vi. 9, 10. *Eph.* v. 6.

no less, "either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for a tree is known by its fruit."*

Some receive the appellation Christian, because they are what is called *morally decent* in their conduct among men. Without true morality, no man can be a Christian; but *mere morality*, is not christianity. Many of the sages of antiquity were what is called *moral men*, yet were ignorant of Christ, and his salvation. Paul before his conversion to the faith of Christ, was, "touching the righteousness which was in the law, blameless." The young man also, who came to the Saviour, could say concerning the commandments of God, "all these things have I kept from my youth up." But could any of these persons, with any propriety of speech, be called Christians? Their morality was their saviour; for "going about to establish their own righteousness, they did not submit themselves to the righteousness of God," but despised Christ "the end of the law for righteousness, to every one who believeth." If men hope to be saved by their morality, is it not rather surprising that they are not more moral. How many such moral people, count the cross of Christ, the Christian's glory, a thing of nought; the preaching of it foolishness; and salvation by grace, through faith in his name, enthusiasm. Yet such are esteemed good Christians. Salvation by grace, through faith in the name of Jesus Christ, *enthusiasm!* If this be enthusiasm, the prophets, the apostles, and Jesus Christ, were all the greatest enthusiasts. Would Paul, who gloried in the cross of Christ, have called such persons Christians? No; he would have said, "I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge," and would have called them, as none of the least of sinners, to repent and believe the gospel.

Others are called by the name Christian, because it is supposed they have been converted. Without conversion to God, no man is a Christian; for "except a man be converted, and become as a little child, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." But in this we are liable to deception. If the animal passions have been moved, alarm of conscience experienced, and some sudden feeling of joy produced in the mind, these are considered by many, true conversion. All these have been produced in many to a very extreme degree, who continue ignorant of Christ, and walk after the course of this world. The passions may be moved, the conscience alarmed, and the mind made joyful, from a variety of causes unconnected with the gospel of Christ. The peculiar tone, the bodily gesticulation, and furious declamation of a preacher, have produced these things in a whole congregation; while the understanding has not been addressed, nor the gospel preached. Sympathy may produce tender feelings, mere dread of present, or eternal danger may excite alarm of conscience, and joy may be produced in the mind, not from the hope revealed in the gospel, but from the hope that we are

* *Math.* xii. 33.

better people. Flatter the pride of the heart, and you will make it joyful; but surely this is not the joy arising from a sense of pardon through the blood of Jesus. If the passions are moved, let it be enquired what has produced this. If the conscience is alarmed, what has excited this alarm? And if the mind is joyful, what has occasioned the joy? When God converts a sinner from the error of his way, feelings are produced in his mind, never experienced before. His passions are moved, his conscience awakened, and his mind comforted, from beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. The new knowledge, which God imparts to the mind, dispels its darkness, quickens its deadness, slays its enmity, humbles its pride, creates fear, produces hope, imparts joy, and turns the person to the Lord. No new revelation is given, but the spirit of God takes of the revelation already given and shews it to the soul. Any conversion without this cannot entitle us to the name Christian; but is a conversion from which we need to be converted. How many in giving an account of their conversion seem to think, that feelings are all that is necessary to prove it genuine. Indeed, to many the knowledge of Jesus Christ is a matter of mere indifference. Such would do well to consider, that ignorance is not the mother of a Christian's devotion. It is life eternal to *know* the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom he hath sent.

Many moreover receive the name Christian, because they are members of some Christian church. Such ought to be Christians, not in name only, but also in deed and in truth. But alas! whilst their names are on the list of the living in Jerusalem, they still continue in the congregation of the dead. Although they have a place, and a name among God's sons and daughters, their chief delight is in the pleasures of sin, and their intimate and daily companions, are his enemies. They are to be found at meeting to-day; and at the playhouse to-morrow. At the Lord's table on the first day of the week; and at the card-table the other six. On that day taking the cup of salvation, and calling on the name of the Lord, and on these days blaspheming. With such, righteousness and unrighteousness, light and darkness, Christ and Belial, God and Mammon, can have communion. "Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of this world, is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be the friend of the world, is the enemy of God." *Joh.* iv. 4. Is this conduct like the followers of Jesus Christ? Is this shunning every appearance of evil? Is this keeping yourselves unspotted from the world? Yourselves being judges, say, are you like men waiting for the Lord's coming? Are these the things, in which Jesus requires you to be engaged when he shall come? Would it be suitable that the sound of the trump of God, should end the game at the card-table, interrupt the dance in the ball-room, or drop the curtain in the playhouse? I say not these things to shame you, but to warn you to flee from the wrath to come. Will a name and a place here among the saints, prove a covert from the tempest, and a refuge from the storm, in

the terrible day of the Lord? No, Jesus will gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and those that do iniquity, and cast them into the lake of fire and brimstone, which is the second death. "If any man hath ears to hear, let him hear what the spirit saith unto the churches."

To conclude; it may be observed, that if any man may be called a Christian, he may also be called by any other name, given to the followers of Christ mentioned in scripture. They are called "saints, holy brethren, sanctified in Christ Jesus, beloved of God, &c." How unseemly to call a drunkard, a profane swearer, or a liar, a *saint:* And how absurd to address multitudes bearing the Christian name, as holy brethren, sanctified in Christ Jesus, and beloved of God. To address them in this manner would rather be to insult, than to confer honour on them.

It may be noticed, further, that in proportion as we daily give evidence of being followers of Jesus Christ, we deserve this name. "Ye are my friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you. If any man serve me let him follow me." The nature of his doctrine and commandments is such, as to prove the love of his disciples. His doctrine stains the pride of all human glory; and his commandments call to unceasing self-denial. "If any man," says Christ, "will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow me." To follow Christ, in opposition to every temptation and inducement to the contrary, proves that we love him above every other object. In these circumstances, Moses proved that he loved Christ more than all the things of a present world. "He chose rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of reward."

Brethren in Christ Jesus, suffor the word of exhortation. We profess to be followers of Jesus Christ; let us follow him fully, through good report, and through evil report. If we have professed his name, let us be careful to depart from all iniquity. If we love him, let us be careful to keep his commandments. Our comfort and happiness are connected with subjection to him. "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light, then have we fellowship one with another." But if we walk contrary to him, he will walk contrary to us. It is only he that followeth Jesus, that shall not walk in darkness. Let us also remember, that his glory in the world, is inseparably connected with our being his followers, not in name only, but in deed and in truth. Our improper conduct may harden the wicked in sin, prejudice them against his gospel, and finally be the means of their ruin. O how dreadful the thought, that while we may at last be admitted to heaven, we may have been the means of leading others to hell. Instead of this, let us, like Noah, condemn the world, leaving them without excuse in the day of the Lord. If we are the light of the world, let us so "shine, that, others seeing our good works, may glorify our Father who is in heaven." Let us never forget the love he hath manifested to us; and if constrained by it, we shall count

his yoke easy, and his burden light. When iniquity abounds, and the love of many waxeth cold, our spirits ought to be stirred within us; fearing lest we also be led away with the error of the wicked, and so fall from our own stedfastness. It is only he that is faithful unto death, that shall receive the crown of life. Let us so run that we may obtain. "If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him; but if we deny him he will also deny us before his Father and his holy angels."—Many have a form of godliness, but deny its power; but from such you are required to turn away. To be in friendship with God, and in confederacy with his enemies is impossible. If Christ Jesus be our Lord and Master, let us ever remember, that he who is not for him is against him; and they who are not his friends, cannot be ours. To compromise matters with false professors, is neither the way to preserve ourselves, nor to save them.

You, who have only the name Christian, may be offended at these remarks. But am I become your enemy, because I have told you the truth? I write not to irritate or offend, but if possible to lead you to consider your ways, and turn to the Lord.

CYPRIAN.

QUESTION.

Are Christians forbidden in the scriptures to eat, at common meals, with an excommunicated person?

As this question is of a *practical* nature, a right solution of it is of great importance. Though *refusing to eat* with persons excommunicated from a church may be attended with difficulty, and in some cases, be matter of great self-denial; yet if enjoined in the scripture it is indispensable. Divine commands must not yield to our pleasure or convenience. But if not enjoined, it must be a mistaken zeal to multiply crosses, or to seek occasion of self-denial, beyond what is warranted in the word of God.

This question has been often discussed;* and in respect to it, Christians are still divided both in principle and practice. The affirmative, i. e. that Christians are forbidden to eat at common meals with an excommunicate, is supposed by many to be supported by an express injunction, in 1 Cor. v. 11, and by natural and fair construction, in many other passages of scripture. They will be all brought into view in the course of the following discussion, in which it will be attempted to be proved that those scriptures which are thought to have a bearing upon this question, have been misunderstood or misapplied, and that the opinion and practice deduced from them are foreign to their original design.

I. The *scope* or *object*, of the chapter which contains the only *direct* testimony in support of the affirmative of this question, is, not the *treatment which is proper* towards those that are *excluded from the church*, but the *proper discipline* of those that are *in it*.

1 Cor. v. 2. "And ye are puffed up and have not rather mourned, that he that hath done this deed might be taken away from among

* Vide Con. Ev. Mag. vol. I. p. 260, and vol. VII. p. 454. Panoplist, vol. I. p. 249.

you." Having stated a particular species of iniquity that was practised, he reminds them that the subject of it ought to have been excommunicated. He is still more plain, in the verses immediately following, 3d, 4th, 5th. "For I verily, as absent in body, but present in spirit, have judged already, as though I were present, concerning him that hath so done this deed; in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, when ye are gathered together, and my spirit, with the power of our Lord Jesus Christ, to deliver such an one unto Satan for the destruction of the flesh, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus." *Delivering unto Satan* undoubtedly means an act of church discipline, and not the individual acts of believers. The same object is kept in view, in the 6th, 7th and 8th verses. "Your glorying is not good: know ye not that a little leaven leaveneth the whole lump? Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our passover is sacrificed for us: therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven—" As by *the feast* here, all understand the sacramental supper; so keeping it *not with old leaven* must intend excluding from it, or excommunicating, those who by the irregular ferment and undisciplined nature of their passions, answer to this character; as it is said, *Purge out therefore the old leaven.* In the 12th verse, the apostle states expressly, that he is treating of those in the church, and of acts of discipline towards them, and not of those without. "For what have I to do to judge them also that are *without?* do not ye judge them that are *within.*" The chapter is closed, and with it this particular subject, in these words, "Therefore put away from *among yourselves* that wicked person." This seems a natural conclusion, if the object in view is the discipline of a church collectively, but not at all applicable, if the object is to give directions to individuals respecting a proper mode of treatment towards persons that are excommunicated.

Now if the true *design* or *scope* of the chapter has been stated, it will help us to a right understanding of the 11th verse, which is inserted between those already mentioned. "But now I have written unto you, not to keep company, if any man that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, or a drunkard, or an extortioner, with such an one, no not to eat;" i. e. persons in the church, guilty of these vices, shall not only not be your particular companions and favorites, considered worthy of advancement and peculiar distinction, but shall not even be admited to partake with you at the table of the Lord, which is a common privilege of all who have not forfeited their title to the Christian character. They are to be *withdrawn from, rejected, purged out, taken away*, or, *delivered unto Satan;* all which phrases, as used in different parts of scripture, signify the same thing. See, in addition to the chapter already considered, the following passages. 2 Thes. iii. 6. "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye *withdraw yourselves* from every brother that walketh disorderly." And Titus iii. 10. "A man that is an heretic, after the first and second admonition, *reject.*"

There may be thought an ob-

jection to the foregoing construction of the passage under consideration, from the injunction, "not to keep company." But whatever may be meant by this phrase, it undoubtedly refers to those in the church, and can therefore be no guide, as to a proper mode of treatment towards those that are without. Some have supposed, that "not to keep company" was an injunction upon individuals, when the church was in a broken or divided state, and unable to execute gospel discipline, that their personal disapprobation might have the nature, and produce the effect of an ecclesiastical censure.* Though this construction would not militate against any sentiment that has been advanced, yet it appears more natural to conclude, that the apostle meant to forbid a familiarity with, and especially conferring favors upon those who were guilty of such vices, even before the act of excommunication could consistently take place; as it must be preceded by repeated admonitions, and various means of amendment and reformation. There was a propriety in treating offenders in a Christian community differently from the heathen; for if they were equally particular in regard to them, they "must needs go out of the world," or have no commerce with it; as the whole world was considered in a state of idolatry, and indeed under the dominion of the prince of darkness. But this mode of censuring vice was not to supersede the necessity of excommunication. Those that are wedded to iniquity must be debarred from the Christian sacrament; and therefore the apostle adds, "no not to eat."

* Vide Pol. in loc.

This additional injunction, it is thought by some, must refer to eating at a common table, and not at the Christian sacrament, from the mode of reasoning the apostle adopts. He had before forbidden them to "keep company," and now adds, "no not to eat," which (if by it is meant partaking of the sacrament) is the highest act of fellowship, and therefore must have been included in the former injunction; as a prohibition of the less necessarily implies a prohibition of the greater.

This difficulty is more *specious* than *real*. For though it be conceded that mutually partaking at the Lord's table is the highest *individual act* of Christian fellowship, yet it is a *common* privilege. Less than this cannot be granted to any who have a standing in the church. And there are *additional acts* of fellowship, and peculiar marks of respect and honor, due to those who are eminent in gifts and grace. If it should be said, that in this view of the subject, the prohibition, "not to keep company," was unnecessary, as it cannot be supposed that any community, worthy the name of a Christian church, could so misapply the tokens of their affection, esteem and honorary distinction, as to foster irregularities; it may be replied, that churches are not perfect, and therefore as liable to err in this respect as in any other. And it appears in fact that the Corinthian church was in this error. Paul tells them, "ye are *puffed up*, and have not rather mourned.—Your *glorying* is not good." And in ch. iv. 19. "I will come to you shortly, if the Lord will, and will know, not the speech of them that are *puffed up*, but the power." St. James also complains of those to

whom he wrote, as "having the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ with respect to persons;" and their peculiar respect was shewn to those least worthy of it. See James ii. 1, 7.

It has been objected, that by the phrase "no, not to eat," Paul probably did not refer to the Lord's supper, because a different *Greek* word is made use of here, from that which is used in the 8th verse of the chapter, where "keeping the feast" is mentioned. There is no need of going to the *original* for this difficulty. It is the same in the *translation*. It is not uncommon, in any language, when the *same object* is brought into view in different connexions, to use a different phraseology. The apostle, in this same letter, ch. xi. 24, 25, uses two different words, applied to partaking of the Lord's supper, both of which are different from either of these.

But that Christians are here forbidden to eat at common meals with a person excommunicated from a church (though the general scope of the chapter is against it) is supposed to be probable, if not absolutely certain, from its coincidence with Christ's direction, relative to a person in that condition. Mat. xviii. 17. "Let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican." They did not eat at common meals with the heathen.

It may be remarked, however, that Christ, by this declaration, does not say whether their treatment towards the heathen was proper or not; much less that it would be proper for Christians in all succeeding ages to treat them in a similar manner. He only observes, that excommunicates and heathen ought to be held in the same light. When persons had forfeited their Christian privileges, they ought to be deprived of them, and treated as though they had never possessed any. If it was right for the Jewish Christians to have no commerce with the heathen, not even to eat with them at common meals, it was undoubtedly right for them to refuse these same civilities to persons excommunicated; for they were bound to treat both in the same manner. But as we treat the heathen otherwise, and have Christ's example to justify us in it, so we must treat excommunicates otherwise. Christ's words, and not the practice of the Jews, is the rule of our duty. The declaration of Christ then, that an excommunicate shall be viewed as an heathen man and publican, together with his example in the treatment of such, is pretty strong evidence that we are not bound to refuse the common civilities of life to, and especially not forbidden to eat with, those who are excommunicated from the church, and deprived of Christian privileges.

II. The apostle's remarks upon the conduct of the Corinthian church, in complying with his directions, give us reason to think that gospel discipline of church members was the object he had in view, and not a particular mode of treatment towards excommunicated persons. See 2 Cor. ii. 4, 5, 6. "For out of much affliction and anguish of heart, I wrote unto you with many tears; not that you should be grieved, but that ye might know the love, which I have more abundantly unto you, But if any have caused grief, he hath not grieved me but in part; that I may not overcharge you all.

Sufficient to such a man is this punishment, which was inflicted of many." The punishment was ecclesiastical censure, or excommunication ; and he declares this to be *sufficient ;* which was inflicted by *many*, i. e. an act of the church collectively.

He recurs to the same subject again, ch. vii 8, 11. " For though I made you sorry with a letter, I do not repent, though I did repent; for I perceive that the same epistle made you sorry, though it were but for a season.—For behold this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you ! yea, what clearing of yourselves ! yea, what indignation ! yea, what fear ! yea, what vehement desire ! yea, what zeal ! yea, what revenge ! in all things ye have approved yourselves to be clear in this matter." The apostle appears to have nothing in view here, but the acts of the church ; no allusion to any particular mode of treatment by individuals, after the offender was excommunicated ; and yet he says, *in all things*, they had approved themselves to be clear in that matter. This perfectly agrees with what he had before said, that the punishment inflicted by many, i. e. that the act of the church in excommunication, was *sufficient*.

III. The prohibition, " no, not to eat," is grounded upon the *vices* of persons, and not upon any *disqualifying church act* respecting them. It refers to their *character*, not their *condition*.

If the apostle had intended to forbid individual Christians the common intercourse of " eating" with persons, in a state of *excommunication*, he would probably have stated *that church act*, as the ground of the prohibition. Otherwise it could not be of general application ; for the *excommunication* of a person may be much more extensively known, than the *reasons* of it. So that a Christian may be called to refuse the common civilities of life to persons, upon other grounds, than what the apostle states. He must refuse " to eat," though he be ignorant whether there exist any such reasons for it or not. Nay, there may be cases, where he must refuse " to eat," though he be fully convinced in his own mind, that the church was in an error, and that there are no such reasons for it. If the apostle had stated excommunication, as the ground of the prohibition, it would have been sufficient, whatever the private opinion of individuals might be, in regard to the public sentence of a church. But as he has not, there is reason to think his meaning has been misunderstood, and his direction misapplied.

This is not an incidental circumstance. It is the current language of scripture. Where familiar intercourse, or common civilities are interdicted, it is upon the ground of vice or heresy. See the following passages. 2 Thes. iii. 14. " If any man obey not our word by this espistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed." Here, *disobedience to apostolic instructions* is stated as a reason for *noting* persons, and *having no company* with them. Romans xvi. 17. " Now, I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions, and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them." Here *divisions and offences* are the reason for *marking* and *avoiding* the au-

thors of them. 2 Tim. iii. 5. "Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof; from such turn away." Here, *hypocrisy* is made the ground of *turning away* from those guilty of it. 2 epistle of John, 10th verse. "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God speed." Here, *common intercourse* is forbidden on the ground of *heresy*.

Whatever line of conduct is proper for Christians towards excommunicates (and it must undoubtedly have some reference to their character and conduct as well as condition, for some may be more and some less guilty) it is believed the apostle had no design of giving directions upon this point. Indeed there appears no necessity for it. Christ had settled that matter before. *Let him be unto thee, as an heathen man and a publican.*

OMICRON.

THE JEWISH CITIES OF REFUGE.

IN the division of the land of Canaan forty-eight cities were sequestered for the use of the levites. Of these cities six were appointed as places of refuge, into which the man who had unwittingly killed another might flee, and there be protected from the slain person's nearest kinsman, who, according to the custom of nations in that day, was the avenger of his blood.

The cities, for the greater convenience and security of those who had occasion to use them, were sequestered, in different parts of the country, some on each side of the river Jordan. And, the Jewish writers say, particular care was taken, that the roads to them from all parts should be straight, wide and smooth, and that way-marks should be placed at every turn to guide the fugitives.

When a person came and claimed admittance into any one of these cities, the elders examined his case at the entrance of the gate, and if there was no evidence of intentional murder, he was taken into protection. He was, however, afterward brought to a trial, before the proper judges, in the district where the deceased person was slain. If he was found guilty of real murder, he was taken from God's altar, and delivered up to suffer the punishment due to his crime. If he was not found guilty, he was sent back to the city, there to remain until the death of the high priest, when he might return to his possession and live unmolested.

To understand the reason and propriety of this singular institution, we should advert to the difference between civilization in that age and in ages since.

In the state of nature, in which men first existed, every man was the avenger of his own wrongs; and in case of murder, in which the sufferer could not avenge himself, the nearest of kin was his avenger; for among the living he was considered as the greatest sufferer. From this state of nature the Jews were now beginning to emerge. God was now bringing them under a regular civil government, under which every reputed offender should be entitled to a trial before he suffered punishment, and should no longer be subject to the vengeance of the party injured, or of his near relatives, who would usually be influenced more by passion than by

right; more by their immediate feelings, than by cool reason. But as it would be extremely difficult to reclaim the Jews at once from their former custom, sanctioned by length of time and by general usage, especially in cases of supposed murder; and as the avenger of blood, in such cases, would be likely to execute vengeance, if it was in his power, without waiting for the slow process of law, so God was pleased to provide a way, in which the reputed murderer might escape the avenger, obtain a fair trial, make his defence, and if he was innocent secure his life. This institution, though it may appear as a hardship on the innocent, yet was a hardship necessarily arising from the then uncivilized state of mankind, and was the best security that could be provided. Even in civilized and regular society, an innocent person suspected of, and brought to trial for murder, or any other high crime, suffers much from the circumstances which unavoidably precede and attend his trial; and often he suffers more from the malignant passions and envenomed tongues of vile and unprincipled men. If the innocent man, suspected of murder, suffered more under the Jewish government, than such a person would do in the present state of society, the fault was not in that government, but in the savage customs and habits of that age.

The manslayer, being acquitted from the charge of wilful murder, was to remain in the city of refuge, until the death of the high priest. Length of time would soften the resentment of the revenger, and the universal and long continued mourning, which followed the priest's death, would obliterate the impressions made by the unhappy casualty, and extinguish the passion of private revenge; so that by this time the prisoner might be enlarged without personal danger. Or if any lurking malice remained in the avenger's bosom, it would be restrained by the consideration, that by executing his malice now, he exposed himself to suffer as a murderer.

This was the political reason of the institution. The moral use of it is suggested by the apostle, in the 6th chap. to the Hebrews, where having stated the promises of the gospel, he says, 'We have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold on the hope set before us.'

Man as a moral and rational being, is bound to a moral and rational conduct. God has given him a law for the government of his heart and life, and to this law has annexed sanctions of reward and punishments. To obedience the law insures life. To transgression it threatens death. A law, as such, makes no provision for pardon. Viewed in relation to the law, the sinner is like the murderer without a place of refuge. The law condemns him, death is denounced against him, and justice pursues him. Where shall he find security? There is a strong tower into which he may run and be safe. Jesus hath borne our sins on the cross, magnified the law by his obedience, and satisfied the demand of justice by his death. There is now no condemnation to them who are in him.

Those cities were provided for *strangers* and *sojourners*, as well as for native Jews. In this respect they prefigured the exten

of gospel grace, which makes no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, bond and free. All are one in Christ Jesus.

The manslayer, in order to his security, must *flee to the city*. If he remained in his house or loitered on the road, till the avenger found him, the city would avail him nothing. So it is on the gospel plan. We must flee for refuge by repentance and faith; else we cannot appropriate the hope set before us. The impenitent, unbelieving sinner has no more security, than the manslayer, who remained at a distance from the city—no more security than if a Saviour had never appeared.

The security of the fugitive depended on his *abiding* in the city. We must continue in Christ's word, else we are not his disciples indeed. Convictions, prayers, resolutions, and professions are not sufficient. We must heartily and unreservedly give ourselves up to the Saviour, and be faithful to the death. Whatever good beginnings we seem to make in religion, if we renounce them, and turn to that course of sin, which we pretend to have forsaken, all that we have done is vain. He that believes to the saving of his soul, is one who lives by faith.

The way to the city was made *straight and plain*, that the fugitive might effect his escape. With equal plainness has the gospel marked out the way of salvation; it is a high way, in which the wayfaring man need not err.

The city of refuge was not a human device, but a divine provision. Such is the gospel dispensation. We had no hand in contriving it, no influence in procuring it, no concern in framing or introducing it; but it originated wholly in the wisdom and mercy of God. We are saved by grace.

The deliverance of the manslayer was attended with some *humiliating circumstances*. He must leave his worldly interests and connexions, and trust to the care of providence in the place assigned him. The gospel requires us to renounce all sin, all worldly affections, and all confidence in ourselves, that we may win Christ and be found in him.

These cities gave great consolation to the manslayer; but much stronger is the consolation, which the gospel gives to the awakened sinner.

Those cities afforded security only to the man who had shed blood *unwittingly*. But "through Christ is preached the forgiveness of all sins, and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the law of Moses."

The cities of refuge were *few* in number; and though they were appointed in different parts of the country, they could not be near to every inhabitant. But our city of defence is near to all, and whosoever will may enter into it and find safety.

Those cities secured to the fugitives only a *temporal* life, and this but for a short time. If they died not by the hand of the avenger, still they must die. But they who believe on the Saviour have *spiritual* and *eternal* life in him, and "they will never perish, nor will any pluck them out of his hands."

The safety of the manslayer was attended with a kind of *bondage*. The believer, under the gospel is delivered from bondage, as well as from danger. He is

justified from the guilt, and rescued from the dominion of sin, admitted to peace with God, allowed near access to him in prayer; and he anticipates more intimate communion with him in heaven.

What anxiety must distract the mind of the unhappy man, who had casually shed his neighbor's blood? The terror of a pursuing avenger added to the distress for an afflicted family and an unfortunate fellow-creature, must be tormenting. Is not the condition of an impenitent sinner far more miserable? Really guilty before God, and every moment exposed to the eternal curse of a righteous law, how can he enjoy peace, or feel quietness in his mind? But there is a blessed hope set before him. Pardon is procured by a great price, and offered with abundant grace. There is a city of refuge near at hand; the gates are open; the way to it is short and plain. Let him flee for refuge and lay hold on the hope set before him. What strong consolation have true believers. They have already laid hold on this hope; and this is an anchor of their souls both sure and stedfast, which enters, not into an earthly city of refuge, but into that holy place within the vail, whither Jesus himself has entered for them. There he is a priest for ever, and by one offering he has perfected for ever them who are sanctified.

ERASTUS.

ON THE BENEFICENT SPIRIT OF CHRISTIANITY.

THE religion of the bible is trancendently excellent. Christianity is not a mere fragment, but a beautiful, consistent, harmonious whole. It is a complete and perfect system of piety and morals. It is incumbered with nothing redundant or superfluous. Nor can the most scrutinizing eye discover in it the least defect. It calls us to the love of God, and a conformity to his moral perfections. Here it begins. "Here it lays the foundation of all genuine goodness in man. And a foundation it is, sufficiently deep, and broad, and firm, to support a lofty and noble superstructure. Of this building, *love to man* is an essential and prominent part. Without this we can no more be Christians, we can no more entertain a rational hope of heaven, than without love to God, or faith in Christ. Nor is this love a mere experience of the mind; something for the reality of which we must be content to take the Christian's *word*. It is active, beneficent, vigorous, indefatigable. It softens the heart to feel for human distress, in all its variety of forms; and stimulates to noble plans and generous exertions for its relief. It renders its possessor an angel of comfort to the afflicted around him. If any proof on so plain a subject be needful, we have it in the explicit assertion of the apostle James." "Pure religion, and undefiled before God and the Father," says he, "is this: to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction." The *fatherless* and *widows* are here specified, not as exclusive of other objects of charity, but rather as specimens; and because they are too apt to be among the most neglected and depressed of their species. Doubtless this inspired declara-

tion embraces the subjects of distress generally. The good man, the real Christian, will feel for them all; and will attend to them as he has ability and opportunity, according to their respective claims. And he will feel most strongly, he will exert himself most vigorously, for those whose distresses are most pressing and apparent. He will not always wait for the applications of the poor. Conscious that that distress not unfrequently is the most pungent, and has the strongest claims to be received, which escapes the public eye, which perhaps modestly retreats from solicitation, he *seeks out* objects for his bounty. He "visits" the friendless and forlorn. And while the unfeeling, the selfish, and ambitious haunt the abodes of wealth and splendor, he delights to *domesticate* himself in the humble recesses of poverty. There, his condescending deportment, his countenance softened into sympathy, his soothing accents, his expressions of tenderness and pity, all combine to pour consolation into the soul of sorrow and despondency. But the benevolent Christian will not stop here. His compassion will manifest itself in *acts* of substantial kindness and relief. An empty-handed visit, though attended with a profusion of soft speeches, and good wishes, is not the thing. Verbal expressions of sympathy, indeed, if we have nothing else to impart, have their importance, and may be greatly consoling to the afflicted. But if it is otherwise, and there are pressing wants to be supplied, mere professions of sensibility and pity will seem more like insults, than like real kindness; and will tend rather to exasperate, than soothe distress. Such empty professions of tenderness are reproved, and almost ridiculed, by the same apostle, in another passage. "If a brother or sister," says he, "be naked, and destitute of daily food, and one of you say to them, depart in peace, be ye warmed and be ye filled: notwithstanding ye give then not those things which are needful for the body; *what doth it profit?*" Will such fair speeches clothe the naked? Will they feed the hungry? Will they save the indigent and distressed from the jaws of death? Will they be accepted as instances of real mercy? Will they meet the rewards which Heaven has promised to genuine benevolence? No: it is impossible. Such sufferers claim of us something more than kind words; something more than even kind feelings. They claim of us, when it is in our power, substantial assistance and relief. Such beneficence is a part of real religion; and an essential part. It is true, mere moralists may counterfeit it. The self-righteous may proudly assume it as theirs. Still it is an essential part of true religion. This is the point to be illustrated.

And who sees not that real *regard to the divine authority*, wherever it exists, will irresistibly excite to such beneficence? When we open the book of God, we find it inculcated so explicitly, so frequently, so peremptorily, so affectionately, and by such a variety of arguments, that we are constrained to consider it a duty not only of indispensable obligation, but of prime impor-

tance. Its so generally finding a place in those portions of scripture in which the whole of practical religion is exhibited in a summary view, is a signal and conclusive proof of its excellence and moment. Its being so often described as an essential and prominent characteristic of a good man; the blessings promised to its discharge; the awful threatenings denounced on its neglect; and the explicit assurance given us by our glorious Redeemer and Judge, that by our character in this respect, our everlasting state will be determined—these are circumstances which strikingly illustrate the high place it holds (so to speak) in the divine mind. How then can we regard the divine authority, unless this duty occupy a distinguished rank in our habitual practice? Can we read, "Thus speaketh the Lord of hosts, shew mercy and compassion every man to his brother;" can we peruse that affecting injunction, "Thou shalt not harden thy heart nor shut thy hand from thy poor brother; but thou shalt open thy hand wide unto him; thou shalt surely give him, and *thy heart shall not be grieved* when thou givest him;"—and not feel ourselves constrained to every act of generous compassion to the indigent and distressed around us—all partakers of the same common nature with ourselves—all children of the same beneficent Parent? This must argue a heart awfully estranged from God: utterly uncontrolled by his authority, and unmoved by the plainest, the most pressing injunctions of duty.

Again: Kindness to our suffering fellow-creatures is a natural and necessary expression of that *gratitude to the Deity*, in which so much of religion consists. What heart that feels aright, does not glow with grateful sensibility to Him who is the Father of mercies, and the overflowing fountain of good; the Almighty Guardian, and unwearied Benefactor of our lives? To him we owe all we are, all we have, all we hope for. We are nothing, we possess nothing, we hope for nothing, but which flows from his self-moved and sovereign bounty. His blessings, though undeserved, abused, forfeited in ten thousand ways, still visit us in a constant, uninterrupted stream. They are various as our wants. They are more numerous than our moments. They are greater even than our sins and ill-deservings. If our mercies even of a *temporal* nature, are plainly entitled to these characters, what then are those *spiritual* favors which the gospel of the grace of God reveals and offers? What is pardon for the guilty? What is peace for rebels? What is eternal life for the perishing? What are mansions of immortal bliss for those who have merited an endless exclusion to regions of darkness and despair? Above all, what is that unspeakable, astonishing GIFT of God to man, which is at once the source and sum of all other divine blessings? Where then are the warm returns for favors so various, so rich, so transcending all human *thought*, as well as human description? Where the strong sense of gratitude, heaving, and ready to burst the human bosom? Alas! gratitude, to the eternal disgrace of

man, is but a stranger on earth. So depraved, so desperately hard are these hearts of ours, that nothing short of an influence almighty and divine, can melt them into tenderness and love. And when he who has mercifully promised, "I will take away the heart of stone, and I will give you a heart of flesh;" is pleased to accomplish the mighty work, a revolution indeed takes place in the human breast. A new train of sensibilities, emotions and desires possesses the soul; the heart flows forth in love and gratitude to the Author of all good. "Lord what wilt thou have me to do?" "What shall I render to my God?"—Such is now its language. How welcome, in such a case, is every intimation of *duty!* How pleased is the grateful Christian to learn, that although his goodness cannot profit his Maker, it *may* profit the objects of his Maker's benevolence and care! What delight will he find in bestowing his time, his substance, and his exertions in a way, which he knows will be acceptable to his Heavenly Father and Benefactor in relieving and comforting *his* poor; in befriending the fatherless and widow, to whom He has pledged his Almighty protection and aid! What a heartfelt and sublime satisfaction must the friend of Jesus realize in administering food, and raiment, and shelter, and consolation to his suffering fellow-christians; and in the consciousness that his blessed Master regards and accepts it all, as done to himself! If we are utter strangers to employments and delights of this kind, may we not well suspect that we are strangers to the love of Christ, and the power of his religion?

Again: all will confess that religion consists much in *imitation* of the Deity. It commences when the divine image is instamped on the soul. Nor do we *make progress* in religion any farther than we grow in conformity to the moral perfections of God and the Redeemer. But *God is love. And he who dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him. Every one who loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. But he who loveth not, knoweth not God.* Solemn, yet delightful truths! How loudly do they call us to place religion, where many are little apt to place it—in *love!* And how directly do they lead us to consider ourselves as Christians, only on the supposition of our having imbibed the spirit of divine benevolence. Nor is it possible that this benevolence, if we possess it, will be an inactive, dormant principle. If the love of God to man was an active, vigorous, expensive, generous, beneficent love, so will ours be, if genuine, to our fellow-creatures. Will it permit us to sit with folded arms, when the needy might be supplied, and the suffering relieved? Will it permit us to gaze as unconcerned spectators, at the woes of humanity, and steel our hearts against the cries of distress: No: for, says the apostle just cited, that eminent proficient in the school of love: *Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?* Such a sordid, unfeeling wretch may bear the Christian *name;*

but he wants the elementary principles of the Christian *temper*. Indeed, how absurd, that that man should dream of being a follower of the benevolent, compassionate, sympathizing Saviour; the Saviour who spent his life in doing good to the bodies and souls of men—whose heart is a stranger to pity, whose hands are shut against the poor, and whose life, considered in reference to every generous and charitable purpose, is a mere blank? A *profane* and *prayerless Christian*, every one sees, would be a solecism. And why should a *sordid*, *selfish*, *hard-hearted Christian*, be esteemed less so?

Farther: as it is a capital design and effect of real Christianity to inspire a temper of self-denial, of mortification to the world, of indifference to its gains and gratifications; so these dispositions are eminently promotive of beneficence. It has been justly remarked, that *nature requires little, and grace still less*. And the man who has learned in the school of Christ, to contract his desires, and be content with little, he it is who has the best preparation to impart generously to the relief of others. The obstacles which ordinarily prevent the exercise of liberality to the distressed, are easily discovered. They are ambition, luxury and avarice. These sordid and hateful propensities, by destroying either the will or the power of doing good, rob the poor and distressed of their due. Multitudes have some superficial and transient inclinations to promote the comfort and happiness of their fellow-creatures. But their rage for splendor and admiration is insatiable, and triumphs over every other feeling. Multitudes would find some pleasure in relieving the distresses they behold around them. But their sordid souls find more, in the unrestrained indulgence of sensual appetites. Multitudes feel some pain, perhaps, in witnessing human misery. But they would feel more, in opening their unwilling hands to mitigate or remove it. Now it is the aim of christianity to dethrone and destroy those base passions, which thus subjugate the mind; and deliver it from its inglorious servitude. And wherever it comes in its power, it actually accomplishes this blessed deliverance. It has performed wonders in this way; such as no maxims of mere morality, no boasted schemes of philosophy, no strains of human eloquence, could ever perform. It has rendered the ambitious, humble and unaspiring; the voluptuary, chaste and abstemious; and (still more wonderful!) it has opened the contracted heart and hand of the miser. If we are Christians indeed, it has atchieved some triumphs of this kind over *us*. And the more we imbibe the spirit of Christian self-denial, the better we shall be prepared to sympathize in the sufferings, to relieve the distresses of our fellow-creatures and fellow-christians.

How great, then, is the mistake of those who place all religion in mere speculation, and who think themselves fair candidates for heaven, on the ground of their rigid adherence to a set of principles deemed orthodox; while their lives are fruitless in works of beneficence.

Alas! the religion which is destitute of the love of man, is equally destitute of the love of God. It neither comes from heaven nor leads thither. Those too, stand reproved, who plume themselves on *mere sensibilities;* who are evermore employed in describing the exquisitely tender feelings of their own hearts; who have neither time nor inclination for the substantial offices of benevolence; and who perhaps think that the business of *actually relieving* the distressed, belongs to persons of less refinement than themselves. Their sensibility is a dream; and its *reward* nothing better. They are among the most unfeeling of their species. Sad indeed would be the condition of the poor, if they lay at the mercy of such. In a word; how dangerous is the error of those who content themselves with the mere outward discharge of the social duties, while the principles and motives by which they should be sublimated into Christian obedience, and thus obtain, through grace, the rewards of eternal life, are unfelt. They are regular in their conduct. No gross immoralities stain their lives. They are kind, perhaps generous, to the poor. This is their religion: for alas! they are strangers to the love of God, and the love of man; to a humble sense of sin, and a gospel faith in the Mediator? Who does not see that such a religion is a mere form without life; a body unanimated by a soul? and who would not weep to think how many useful, and in some respects amiable persons of this description, are travelling the broad way to ruin? Z.

PIOUS MEDITATIONS.

No. 1.

Psalm lxxxix. 1. *I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever.*

MANY are the objects around me, which afford pleasure. I awake in the morning, refreshed and vigorous; the cheerful light of the sun and the anticipations of hope, gladden my heart. I meet my friends, and in their countenances I see that my presence gives them delight. I mingle in the world, and while I am agitated by its concerns, carefully observe each passing event, and every form of human passion. I carry my observations with me into retirement; I compare and reason; I discover the springs of human action, and derive satisfaction from the consciousness of searching deeper into the heart, than those around me, But how cold and comfortless is all the enjoyment I find, compared with that, which springs from a view of *the mercy of the* LORD?

I am defiled by sin; I am the slave of iniquity, the child of Satan, the enemy of a Holy God. I neither love nor praise my Friend and Benefactor. I am becoming ripe for destruction; and yet am blind to my danger, unaffected by my guilt, insensible of my wretchedness. In this condition *mercy* finds me; alarms my fears; awakens conscience to his work; and brings home to my soul a conviction of my sin. I go mourning all the day long. I know that God is righteous, and that justly I merit the cup, the unmingled cup of his wrath: but I have no hope. *Mercy* opens my eyes to behold the blessed SAVIOUR, the chief among ten thousand; *mercy* dissipates my

doubts, drives away my fears, inspires me with confidence, and fills me with joy.

I perceive how *God can be just and yet justify those who believe in Jesus*, laying their sins and their good works at his feet. I am satisfied with goodness. Under the reception of such blessings, unmerited and freely bestowed, I am filled with admiration, and cry out "*I will sing of the mercies of the Lord forever.*" Never, O Lord, will I forget thy goodness; I will speak of it in the assemblies on earth; and in the great congregation above it shall be my joyful everlasting theme. W.

SELECTIONS.

A Narrative of the STATE OF RELIGION, *within the bounds of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church, in the United States, for the year* 1808. *Read in the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia, May 25th.*

THE General Assembly acknowledge with ardent gratitude the distinguished benignity of God to the churches within their bounds during the year past. He hath truly done great things for us; building up the waste places of Zion, and adding unto the number of such as shall be saved. From every quarter, with but few exceptions, we hear of harmony among our ministers, order among our congregations, an increased attention to the ordinances of the gospel, and the progressing triumphs of that grace, by which alone sinners can be reconciled to God. In many places, especially within the bounds of the synod of New-York and New-Jersey, times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord are experienced. The Spirit has been poured out on considerable portions of country, and fruits of righteousness have appeared, honorable to the kingdom of Christ, and inviting to the world, which lieth in wickedness. Unhallowed combinations have been broken up; enemies to the cross have been confounded, and in many instances made the subjects of divine grace.

It is observable that the work, though powerful, has progressed with great silence, uncommon solemnity, and free from all appearance of extravagance.

The revivals have been preceded in every instance by a union of prayer among christians, to which they have felt constrained by the fervent desire of their hearts, that Christ might be glorified, and by deep and solemn impressions of the value of precious and immortal souls. Believing parents, more especially, have been influenced to wrestle with God in behalf of their children. We record with peculiar emotions of delight, for the encouragement of the godly, that, as in all ages past, so still, our God is a hearer of prayer. He has come down from his high and holyplace,andgranted the requests of his people. The consequences have been that the assemblies of the saints were crowded with in-

quiring sinners. Many meetings for prayer and praise have been established. It appears that in several places, a number of persons have adopted the plan of assembling together on the sabbath morning, immediately before public worship, and spending some time in religious exercises, particularly in prayer for the divine presence and blessing in the public institutions of his worship. This, if properly managed, may prove a happy preparative for the worship of the sanctuary. We would, however, earnestly caution all who are under our care, against suffering public duties to interfere with the duties of the family and the closet.

Among the visible fruits of an increased attention to the gospel, we recognise the establishment of benevolent institutions, as peculiarly characteristic of the religion of Jesus. We mean associations for the relief of destitute widows and orphans, for the instruction of the ignorant in divine knowledge, and for the benefit of the poor generally. It is a distinguished excellence of the gospel of Christ, that it is suited to the poor: not merely to their afflicted condition, but to their intellectual acquirements. Christians can give no better evidence of their sincere attachment to the Lord, who bought them, than by manifesting love, not only to their brethren in Christ, but to mankind in general. The fruits of benevolence ought ever to accompany the profession of piety; and it is exclusively the glory of christianity, that it has produced every where, as far asits influence extends, effective plans to meliorate the condition of the poor. We hope our brethren, in all our churches, will more fully testify, in this particular, the power of the grace of God.

In the southern parts of our bounds, the extraordinary revivals of religion have considerably declined: bodily agitations are gradually disappearing: in one instance, where extravagance and wild enthusiasm had been avowed and defended, in opposition to the pastoral advice of this body, we are happy to learn that the abetters have acknowledged their error, and returned to the good order of our church.

Those who have been the subjects of the revival persevere in the ways of godliness, with but few exceptions. Apostacies are rare. Accessions to the communion are made on every occasion, though not in such numbers as formerly. Believers are still on the watch; disposed to pray, and actually praying for the spread of the gospel, and the triumphs of grace over all opposition.

In those districts of country, as well as in some others, the want of gospel ministers is severely felt. People are suffering for lack of instruction,and calling for help; but help adequate to their necessities cannot be obtained. The assembly regret, that so few, comparatively, offer themselves as candidates for the holy ministry; and they hope that the attention of the churches under their care will be directed to this important subject, that by their united exertions, some effectual plan for statedly supplying the wants of Zion may be formed.

With such abundant cause of gratitude, is connected cause of sorrow and humiliation. We have observed with pain, that in some presbyteries, the duties of

family religion, and of catechetical instruction, are neglected. Truly it is shameful in men who call themselves by the name of Christ, not to honor him before their families, by worshipping him statedly. Every head of a family is responsible for all its members to God and his country. How can he expect to fulfil his duty, if he does not pray for and with them, and instruct them from the word of God? If *he* does not honor God, it cannot be expected *his family* will. And a Christian family living without family religion, is a contradiction. It argues on the part of such professors an awful declension and a criminal dereliction of duty.

In many places, also, we have heard of lukewarmness and inattention to the great concerns of religion; of the profanation of the sabbath by thoughtless sinners, and of decline in the life of godliness. How lamentable, that with the light of the gospel shining around us, any should walk in darkness, and despise the goodness of God!

From our sister churches in Connecticut and Vermont, we learn with pleasure that revivals prevail there also; that religion flourishes; that among other instances of mercy, Yale college is graciously visited; and that believers are walking in the comforts of the Holy Ghost.

On a review of the state of religion in the churches referred to above, we rejoice in saying that it has progressed in the last year, and that it is still progressing. This revives us in our pilgrimage, and causes us to look forward with pleasing expectations. The Redeemer will ultimately reign throughout the earth. "His Name shall endure for ever: His Name shall be continued as long as the sun, and men shall be blessed in him: all nations shall call him blessed."

We only add, "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things: and blessed be his glorious name, for ever; and let the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen." *Evan. Int.*

ENCOURAGEMENT TO FAITHFUL MINISTERS.

"He that saith unto the wicked, thou art righteous; him shall the people curse. But to them that rebuke him shall be delight, and a good blessing shall come upon him." *Solomon.*

COMMENT.

"Though the minister who flatters and deceives men's souls, may be caressed and prospered; he will hereafter be more deeply and universally execrated, than any other person in the world. But he who reproves and rebukes with affectionate faithfulness; whatever return he may have from men, shall have delight in the testimony of his conscience, in the good done by him, and in the favor of his GOD, and "blessings of good shall come upon him." *Scott.*

ANECDOTES.

Milner's Church History.

VOL. III. PAGE 79. and BEDE B. I.

Rapin's History, Vol. 1. Page 65.

IN the year 597, Gregory the Great, Bishop of Rome, sent Augustine the Monk, with about forty companions, to preach the gospel in England; at this time the Church of Rome was not that idolatrous, superstitious apostate,

which she hath since appeared; the absurd doctrine of the real presence was not known till 400 years after this event. The circumstances were remarkable. Gregory one day walking in the market place, beheld several fine youths bound with cords, exposed to be sold as slaves; he asked whence they came, and was informed from the island of Britain. He then enquired, "Are the inhabitants of that island, Christians or Pagans? He was told Pegans. Alas! said he, deeply sighing, does the Prince of Darkness possess such countenances. Are forms so fair destitute of divine grace!—What is the name of the nation? It was answered, ANGLI. In truth, said he, they have angelic countenances, it is a pity they should not be coheirs with angels.—What part of Angli do they come from? From DEIRA, (that is Northumberland). Let them be delivered De ira, i. e. from the wrath of God, and called to the mercy of Christ.—What is the name of their king? ELLA. Let us, said he, still playing on the name, teach them to sing Allelujah.

He upon this never lost sight of the Mission to England. Augustine landed in the Isle of Thanet, in Kent. Ethelbert and his Queen were converted to christianity, and Augustine was shortly after made the first English Bishop of Canterbury, where the remains of his Church continue to this day.

A SINGULAR AND KIND PROVIDENCE.*

Col. John Bayard, an eminent merchant in the city of Philadelphia, sent a vessel to France, early in the year 1777, to purchase military stores, under the command of a Capt. Stocker, who had sailed some time in his employ; and Mr. William Hodge, his brother-in-law, went supercargo. His vessel arrived safe at her destined port, and was loaded with powder, muskets, bayonets, gunflints, &c. The British spies in the several ports of France, gave notice of this vessel being there, her cargo, and of the time of her sailing, to their administration; and two vessels were sent out from England to cruise off about the mouth of the Delaware Bay to intercept and take her. For several days before she came on the coast, the weather was so thick and *hazy*, that Capt. Stocker could not get an observation, and therefore had no other way to know his situation, than by throwing his lead; this he did with great diligence and care, when he found himself in soundings, and the water was sometimes deeper and sometimes shallower. Thus the vigilance of the two British vessels was eluded. In this situation a dark night came on, and he went on throwing his lead, and in the morning to his great surprise, he found himself near the upper end of Ready Island, one hundred miles up the Bay, and within fifty miles of Philadelphia. Thus the United States were furnished with a seasonable supply of the most essential articles, for carrying on their war, at an early period of their struggle for Independence.

Extract.

I remember an instance of a person irresolute and wavering in the concerns of his soul, divided between hope and fear, who in his prayers was earnestly intreating, to be assured of his own perse-

* Furnished to the editors of the Panoplist, by Rev. Dr. Rodgers of New-York.

verence: and expressing how happy he should think himself, could he be satisfied in this point. Whereupon he was immediately answered from within. *Well, and supposing you could be assured of this, how would you proceed then? Do but act now as you would think yourself obliged to do in that case, and never question your persevering.* This comfortable reply settled his mind; and instead of indulging any enquiries into events, or anxious doubts concerning the success of his endeavours; he immediately applied himself to consider what God expected from him, and to set about the performance without more to do. *Trust in the Lord and be doing good* says the Psalmist, *commit thy way to him and he shall bring it to pass.* KEMPIS.

ANCIENT THEOLOGICAL INSTITUTIONS.

As some objections have been made to the Theological Institution lately established at Andover (Mass.) you are requested to publish in your useful work the following extract; from which it will appear, that such establishments are as old as christianity itself.*

The Christians (in the first century) took all possible care to accustom their children to the study of the scriptures, and to instruct them in the doctrines of their holy religion; and schools were every where erected for this purpose, even from the very commencement of the Christian church. We must not, however, confound the *schools* designed only for children, with the *gymnasia*, or *academies* of the ancient Christians, erected in several large cities, in which persons of riper years, especially such as aspired to be public teachers, were instructed in the different branches both of human learning and of sacred erudition. We may, undoubtedly, attribute to the apostles themselves, and their injunctions to their disciples, the excellent establishments, in which the youth destined to the holy ministry, received an education suitable to the solemn office they were to undertake, 2 Tim. ii. 2. St. John erected a school of this kind at *Ephesus*, and one of the same nature was founded by POLYCARP at Smyrna. * But none of these were in greater repute, than that which was established at *Alexandria* † which was commonly called the *catechetical school*, and is generally supposed to have been erected by St. Mark.‡

* From Mosheim's Eccles. Hist. Vol. I. p. 115. Phila. edit.

* Irenæus, adv. Hæres, lib. ii. cap. xxii. p. 148 ed. Massuet. EUSEBIUS, *Hist. Eccles.* lib. v. cap. xx. p. 188.

† The Alexandrian school was renowned for a succession of learned doctors, as we find by the accounts of EUSEBIUS and ST JEROM; for after ST. MARK, PANTÆNUS, CLEMENS ALEXANDRINUS, ORIGEN, and many others, taught in it the doctrines of the gospel, and rendered it a famous seminary for Christian philosophy and religious knowledge. There were also at *Rome*, *Antioch*, *Cæsarea*, *Edessa*, and in several other places, schools of the same nature, though not all of equal reputation.

‡ See the dissertation of SCHMIDIUS, *de Schola Catecherica Alexandrina;* as also AULISIUS, *Delle Scuole Sacre*, book ii. ch. i. ii. p. 5—17. and ch. xxi. p. 92. The curious reader will find a learned account of the more famous Christian schools in the eastern parts, at *Edessa*, *Nisibus and Seleucia*, and, indeed, of the ancient schools in general, in ASSEMANUS's *Biblioth. Oriental. Clement. Vaticana*, tom. iii. par. II. p. 914—919.

REVIEW OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

A Dissertation on the Prophecies, that have been fulfilled, are now fulfilling, and will hereafter be fulfilled, relative to the great period of twelve hundred and sixty years; the Papal and Mahommedan apostacies, the tyrannical reign of Antichrist, or the Infidel Power, and the Restoration of the Jews. By GEORGE STANLEY FABER, *B. D. Vicar of Stockton-upon-Tees. In two volumes.* Andrews and Cummings, Boston.

THE author of this new, learned, and admirable work professes to be guided by these three simple principles. "1. To assign to each prophetic symbol its proper definite meaning, and never to vary from that meaning. 2. To allow no interpretation of a prophecy to be valid, except the prophecy agree, in every particular, with the event, to which it is supposed to relate. And 3. To deny, that any link of a chronological prophecy is capable of receiving its accomplishment in more than one event.'

If the author has strictly adhered to these principles, as we think he has, his interpretations cannot but be in the main correct. In the first chapter he gives a general and summary statement of the subject. This greatly assists the reader to understand the scheme of prophecy before him. In the second chapter, he explains the symbolical language of prophecy, and shews, that though different symbols are often used to express the same thing, yet the same symbol is never used to express different things, unless such different things have a manifest analogical resemblance. Hence he observes, that "the language of symbols is more perfect than ordinary language, as it possesses the variegated elegance of *synonyms*, without the obscurity, which arises from the use of ambiguous terms."

In the third chapter he critically examines the scriptural phrases of the *latter days*, the *last days*, and the *time of the end*; and finds, that the latter days denote the gospel dispensation, and, in prophecy, that portion of the gospel age, which falls within the period of twelve hundred and sixty years; that the last days, used *declaratively*, signify the gospel time, but used *prophetically*, signify the time near the end of the before mentioned period; that the *time of the end* relates to the time just before, or immediately succeeding the close of that period.

By fixing the meaning of the symbols, and determining the intention of the phrases frequently used in prophecy, he has rendered it much more easy to understand and ascertain the design of those predictions, in which such symbols and phrases are used.

Having thus judiciously prepared the way, he proceeds to explain the prophecies themselves. He begins with those of Daniel. He observes, that,

"From the days of this prophet to the time of the Millennium, there are to be no more than four empires, universal so far as the church is concerned; the Babylonian, the Mede-

Pe-

Persian, the Macedonian, and the Roman."

May we not then conclude, that the French empire will be restrained from extending its dominion over the Christian world, or from exercising its power in such a manner, as essentially to injure the church?

It was under the Roman empire, that the period began, which the author proposes to elucidate. This began, as he very clearly shews, in the year 606 of the Christian era, and consequently will end in the year 1866. The prophecies relating to this period he luminously explains, and applies to their appropriate events, with a strict adherence to the principles, which he at first laid down. For the verification of their accomplishment he resorts to authentic history, and particularly to *Gibbon's* History of the Rise and Fall of the Roman Empire. His historian could not have been more judiciously chosen: Gibbon's abilities are unquestionable, and his sentiments with regard to christianity secure him from all suspicion of a design to establish its credit.

Having explained the prophecies of Daniel, he proceeds to those of John in the Revelations, which, he says, are immediately connected with that part of Daniel's prophecies, which relates to the twelve hundred and sixty years, and are only more minute and comprehensive predictions of the same events, which, Daniel had foretold.

"The apocalypse is a history of the Christian church militant, from the days of John, to the end of time. That part of the history, which relates to the twelve hundred and sixty years, is detailed as a war between the Lamb and the Dragon, or between Christ and Satan, which war terminates triumphantly with the total overthrow of the Dragon and his adherents, and the millennial reign of Christ"

"This book," he observes, "is divided into three successive periods, the seven seals, the seven trumpets, and the seven vials. The seventh seal comprehends all the trumpets, and the seventh trumpet all the vials; for the seventh trumpet is the last of the great woes; and the seven vials are the last of the plagues"

"Under the seals and the four first trumpets, the history of the Roman empire, before and after the days of Constantine, to the beginning of the seventh century, is chronologically and circumstantially related. In the beginning of the seventh century, a new era commences. John henceforth describes a series of troubles and persecutions, which the church was to undergo, during the space of twelve hundred and sixty years. The events of that space are comprehended under the three last trumpets, and the third of these contains the seven vials, which are the seven last plagues."

"This period of twelve hundred and sixty years is the duration of the great apostacy in its dominant state, or the reign of the two little horns of the beast, one in the East, and the other in the West, or Mohammedism and Popery. These two apostate horns arose together in the same year, and will continue to depress the church to the time of the end."

"Toward the close of the twelve hundred and sixty years, and after the reformation, it is predicted, that the king, who magnified himself above every God, or the long expected *Antichrist*, will be revealed in all his horrors—that great Antichrist, whose badge is the open denial of the Father and the Son, or an unreserved avowal of atheism and infidelity."

As this part of the prophecy, in the author's opinion, relates to the present times, and is now fulfilling before our eyes, his observations upon it merit our most serious attention. Daniel

in the 11th chapter of his book, speaks of "a king," i. e according to the language of prophecy, a *kingdom*, *state*, or *power*, "who should do according to his will, should exalt and magnify himself above every god, and speak marvellous things against the God of gods, should not regard the God of his fathers, nor him who is the desire of women;" i. e. the Messiah so called, because it was the desire of the Jewish women that the Messiah might descend from them; "yet when he should be established in power, he would honor *Mahuzzim*, or tutelary gods, together with a god, whom his fathers knew not; and he would honor them with gold and silver and precious stones. Unto the upholders of these gods, he would multiply glory, and divide the land for a price."

"No person," says our author, "can compare the character of this *king* with the vices of the *last times*, detailed by Paul, Peter and Jude, and not be convinced, that they are closely connected together. Like the Antichrist of St. John, he was to be a professed *Atheist*; and as such to speak marvellous things against the God of gods, to disregard the God of his immediate predecessors, to pay as little respect to that illustrious character, who was the desire of women, and, in short, to pay no regard to any God. Like the scoffers of the last days he was to be heady and high minded, to magnify himself above all; to blaspheme the name of God, deny the Lord that bought him, and mock at a future judgment. This king was not to be revealed, till after the period of the reformation, and near the close of the twelve hundred and sixty years."

"And shall we, while recent events are fresh in our memory, find any difficulty in pointing out the nation prefigured by this *infidel king*? Have we not all beheld a mighty people, after the period of the reformation, and during the last days of open blasphemy, rising up as one man, and throwing off every restraint civil and religious, disregarding the dignity of their sovereign, and the High Majesty of heaven; trampling on the rights of nations and individuals, with *liberty*, *humanity* and *philanthropy* ever in their mouths; and rending asunder all the endearments of social life, as if human nature could only be perfected by being previously brutalized? When we consider the character of the infidel king, and the period at which Daniel predicted his manifestation, we can scarcely hesitate to pronounce him to be *revolutionary France*."

The author proceeds to enumerate several remarkable circumstances of coincidence between the prophecy and the event to which he applies it.

"As the king was to rise up after the reformation, so has the power of infidel France risen at the same period. As the king was to magnify himself above every God, whether true or false, so has the atheistical republic, soaring with a bold flight of impiety above her heathen and papal precursors, maintained an avowed denial of the very existence of the Deity.

"Yet, in the midst of undisguised atheism, the king was not without a god of his own. He was to worship, as soon as he was established in power, a certain god at the head of a host of mahuzzim or tutelary gods. This was to be a *strange* or *foreign* god. The Romans were, probably, the only nation, who expressly deified *Liberty*, till the worship of it was borrowed from them by the infidels of France. *Liberty*, it is conceived, is the *foreign god* so peculiarly venerated by the infidel king. One of the tenets of modern philosophy is, that *tutelary* gods, not only reason, equality, the constitution, &c. but even dead men may be canonized, consecrated and worshipped. In harmony with this doctrine, the republic formally enrolled in the list of its Mahuzzim, Voltaire, Rousseau, Mirabeau, Marat, &c."

"The king was to cause the upholders of his tutelary gods to *rule over*

many. The avowed principle of France have been to extend the empire of the champions of her Mahuzzim, and to cause the whole world to bow down before the shrine of that imaginary deity, which they misname *Liberty.*"

"The king was to honor his Mahuzzim with gold and silver and precious stones. This part of the prophecy has been accomplished by infidel France both indirectly and directly, both abroad and at home."

"The king was likewise to divide the land for a price. He was to take it from its former possessors, and divide it among his adherents the champions of his Mahuzzim, on the consideration of being paid by them a certain price for it. Successful invaders rarely sell the lands which they have seized, though they often divide them among their victorious troops. But this kingdom or power was not merely to divide the land; it was to divide it *for a price.* Exactly such has been the conduct of the atheistical republic. The French revolution has differed from all others, not only in producing a change in government, but likewise in effecting a complete change of landed property. With a view to preclude for ever the possibility of a counter revolution, the lands of the crown, the church and the nobility were declared to be the sole property of the nation, and then sold at a moderate price to the partizans of anarchy and atheism."

The author supposes, it may here be objected, "that the French people have thrown aside their atheistical hatred to christianity, and have once more avowed themselves papists." To this he answers, that this religious establishment "is a mere political puppet, little regarded by the people or their rulers." That "judging from the political appearance of Europe, the concurring prophecies of Daniel and John relative to the duration of the great apostacy, would not have received their complete accomplishment, had not *Antichrist* or atheism become the avowed supporter of it." "And unless *Antichrist*, at some period or other of his existence had actually leagued himself with the papacy, the prophecies, which relate to the great events that are to take place at the termination of the twelve hundred and sixty years, could not have been fully and exactly accomplished."

This king, or state, the author pronounces to be "a motley monster, compounded of atheism and popery, doing according to his will, exalting himself, tyrannizing over his weaker neighbors, and scourging the members of that apostacy, which he professes to venerate and uphold. In this state, or in a state similar to this, it is supposed, he will continue to the end of the twelve hundred and sixty years, and till the commencement of the restoration of the Jews,* when he shall come to his end and none shall help him."

The last chapter of this work contains a brief recapitulation of the leading points which have been discussed, and closes with the following serious and impressive observations:

"On the whole, it is reasonable to conclude, that the time is not very far distant, when the symbolical *heaven* and *earth* shall pass away, and when

---

* Since the work under review was published, the same author has presented to the public in two volumes, "A general and connected View of the Prophecies, relative to the conversion, restoration and future glory of the house of Judah and Israel; the progress and final overthrow of the Antichristian confederacy in the land of Palestine; and the ultimate general diffusion of christianity."—This work, from so able a writer, and on a subject so interesting, we hope will receive an American edition. [*Ed'rs.*

the *personal word* shall begin to tread *the wine-press* of the fierceness and wrath of almighty God. Never were there more awful times than these of the *third woe-trumpet* All civilized government has been in a state of commotion; and the powers of Europe have been shaken to their very centre. The end, however, is not yet. The calamities of *the harvest*, are but the harbingers of those which shall take place under *the last vial*, during the period of *the vintage*. Men have not yet ceased to blaspheme the name of the Lord: soon, therefore, shall *the spirits of devils* go forth from the mouth of *the dragon, the beast*, and *the false prophet*, to delude them to their destruction. Few, pehaps, indeed, of the present generation will behold *the division of the Latin city into three parts, the formation of the antichristian confederacy, their invasion of Palestine, their opposition to the maritime power which shall begin the restoration of the Jews, their temporary capture of Jerulem, their ultimate destruction at Armageddon:* but if I be not greatly mistaken in the date which I have assigned to the twelve hundred and sixty years, many of our children will be eye-witnesses of these events. For ourselves, we have only to labor through the grace of God, and the assistance of his Holy Spirit, that we may be prepared to meet the Lord at his coming. Death, whenever it shall arrest our progress, will assuredly be the end of the world to each of us. We pervert the study of prophecy, if we make it only a mere curious speculation. We ought rather so to read the oracles of God, as to profit by them in all holiness of life and conversation. Neither a hearty reprobation of the cruelties and corruptions of *Popery;* nor an abhorrence of the impious imposture of *Mohammedism;* nor a detestation of the diabolical principles of *Antichrist*, are alone sufficient to prepare us for the kingdom of heaven. We must beware, lest we have a name that we live and are dead. We must be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain that are ready to die, lest our works be not found perfect before God. It will be but small comfort to each of us as individuals, that our country is preserved amidst the wreck of nations, to fulfil the future high purposes of the Almighty, if we through our own negligence fall short of the promised reward. In fine, our eternal interests will be but little benefitted by the study of prophecy, unless we pursue it in the manner which the apostle himself hath proposed to us. 'Blessed is he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and *keep those things which are written therein:* for the time is at hand.'"

From these extracts the reader will be able to form some opinion of the work under review. Although we are not prepared to give our unqualified assent to the correctness of Mr. Faber's reasonings and conclusions, in all cases; although his mind may have been, in some instances, too forcibly impressed with the dazzling events of the French revolution; yet we hesitate not to say, it is the most valuable and seasonable commentary that we have seen on the prophecies relative to the period of the great apostacy. It does much credit to the learning, ingenuity and piety of its author; and we recommend it to the serious and attentive perusal of all, who wish in these eventful times to gain a clearer knowledge of the prophetic scriptures, or to confirm their faith in the sacred canon. "Great and awful purposes are, doubtless, tending towards their accomplishment by the present circumstances of the world Firmly believing that all the changes and revolutions which have taken place, or which may hereafter come to pass, will be made subservient to the advancement of the kingdom of Christ, let it be our care, in this highly distinguished nation, to preserve the Christian faith pure and undefiled; to become not only nominal

ly, but really, the disciples of Christ; and to labor by all the means in our power, to promote the interests of his religion in our own country, and in the world at large. Thus shall we be prepared for all events; for trials and persecutions, if such should be ordained; or, as we rather hope, for witnessing and sharing in the increasing triumphs of our Lord.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

UNITED STATES.

ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MASSACHUSETTS MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

The NINTH ANNUAL MEETING of the Massachusetts Missionary Society was holden at Boston, on the 24th, 25th, and 26th days of May last. The meeting was numerously attended both by ministers and other members of the Society, who appeared to be animated with unabating zeal for the promotion of the great objects of the institution. After a solemn address to the throne of divine grace by the President, the following report of the Trustees was read by the Secretary.

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES OF THE MASSACHUSETTS MISSIONARY SOCIETY.

BRETHREN,

The Board of Trustees, charged with the management of the important concerns of this Society, for the last year, respectfully submit the following report of their doings, and of the general state of the missionary interest.

At the commencement of the last Missionary year, six Missionaries were appointed by this Board: the Rev. Lathrop Thomson, for six months in the new settlements west of Lake Champlain; Mr. Joseph Merrill, for six months, in the Genesee country; Mr. Algernon S. Bailey, for six months, in the District of Maine; Mr. Samuel Sewall, for six months, in the northern parts of New-Hampshire; the Rev. Curtis Coe, for six months, in the State of Rhode Island, and the Rev. Jacob Cram, for four months, among the western Indians.

Mr. Thomson accepted his appointment, entered upon his mission, and with several interruptions, completed it in the course of the year. His journal has not been received; but the following extracts from a letter, addressed by him to the Secretary, may afford satisfaction and encouragement.

"I closed my six months tour of missionary labor on the 13th of this month, (March) at Lake Champlain. I have mostly spent my time in the counties of Washington, Essex, and Clinton. Laboured one hundred and eighty-two days, or twenty-six weeks. Preached one hundred and eighty-eight times; made forty-five family visits; attended thirty conferences; visited five schools; formed one church of ten members, and assisted in forming two more, one of twelve members, the other of twenty-six; admitted twelve persons into church covenant, and propounded twelve more for admission; baptized six adults, and twenty-four children; administered the Lord's supper to three churches; saw several bold sinners bow to the Cross of Christ, and witnessed in three or four different places the solemn shaking of dry bones. People appear to have a grateful sense of the benevolence of Missionary Societies, and the compassion of their patrons."

Mr. Merrill accepted his appointment, and performed the duties of his mission, as it is believed, with a very good degree of fidelity, zeal and success.

Mr. Bailey accepted his appointment; but no communications from

him respecting his mission have yet been received.

Mr. Sewall's tour was extensive, and the duties of his mission arduous. By a communication received from him, it appears, that in the whole of his mission, he travelled one thousand seven hundred and ninety-one miles, preached one hundred and fifty-eight times, visited one hundred and ten families, nineteen sick persons, and three schools, and attended three funerals; that, in general, he was very favorably and gratefully received; and, in several instances, had the satisfaction to witness a very pleasing success of his Missionary labors.

Mr. Coe's mission appears, also, to have been performed with great engagedness and fidelity, and with pleasing success "In my late mission," he writes, "I have preached one hundred and seventeen sermons; eight times administered the Lord's supper; and assisted in an ordination over a church lately formed in a village of Dartmouth, where no one of our order ever preached before March, 1807. I have also baptized fourteen adults and twenty-four children; admitted nineteen members into churches before formed, and given assistance in forming one church of forty members; attended thirty conferences, three church meetings, one special fast, and three meetings for prayer; and made five hundred and eighty-nine family visits. Great attention and hospitality have been received, and great displays of divine grace have been seen. Since the winter of 1807, about four hundred have joined the different churches of our order not far distant, three of which have been lately formed. In several villages, the external reformation from profanity, intemperance, and contempt of divine institutions, to decent order, has been great. The largest additions to the churches have been made, where the people have been trained to regular habits, under stated ministrations of the word; but a respectable number in the missionary field."

From the Rev. Mr. Cram, no communications have yet been received.

At the time of the last annual meeting, as it was thought to fall within the general design of this benevolent institution, a grant of fifty dollars was made by the Board to an Indian youth by the name of Williams, whose object it is, so soon as he shall be qualified for the service, to devote himself to the instructions of his *brethren according to the flesh*, and whose recommendations for piety and abilities are highly satisfactory.

At the semi-annual meeting of the Board in October last, the Rev. Jotham Sewall, and Mr. Abraham Burnham were appointed for missions in the District of Maine; Mr Bailey, and Mr. Merrill were re-appointed for the western regions; and Mr. Nahum Fay was conditionally appointed for the destitute settlements in the State of Vermont; all to continue in the service until the present month.

The Rev. Mr. Sewall, pursuant to his appointment, entered upon his mission, but continued in the service only seven weeks; "in which time," he states in his journal, "I rode four hundred miles; preached sixty times, visited twenty-five families, two schools, and five sick persons; attended four conferences, admitted seven persons to church-fellowship, baptized four adults and eleven children, and administered the Lord's supper once." From his journal it also appears that Mr Sewall, as usually he has been, was very gratefully received; and that, in four or five different places, he had the satisfaction to witness very pleasing revivals of religion.

Mr. Burnham did not find it consistent to accept his appointment; but in his place Mr. Jacob Burbush, pursuant to an arrangement for the purpose, performed a mission of five months in the eastern District. From him however, no communications, from which any particulars can be given, have yet been received.

Agreeably to his re-appointment, Mr. Merrill continued in his western mission. In a letter addressed to the Board, and giving a summary view of his whole service, under both appointments, Mr. Merrill states: "I have spent forty-five weeks in the service of the Society; in which time I have travelled one thousand four hundred and ten miles; preached two hundred and eighteen times; vis-

ited four hundred families and a number of schools; attended several funerals and frequent conferences; and as opportunity presented, visited the sick and sorrowing.—In the different places, in which I was called to labor, I uniformly found a kind reception. People were attentive and solemn; Christians were mourning and hungry for the word; and often with tears of gratitude, they would acknowledge the benevolence of those, who were mindful of their spiritual wants."

In the course of the year the Rev. John Sawyer, under a former appointment, performed a mission of thirteen weeks in the District of Maine.

So far as the Trustees have been able to ascertain, THE MASSACHUSETTS MISSIONARY MAGAZINE has been continued, with about the same extent of circulation, and about the same productiveness to the funds of this Society, as in former years. The Committee, appointed at the last annual meeting to obtain an incorporation of the Society, have executed their commission with success. New members in the course of the year past have been added; our funds have been liberally augmented; and the general patronage of the society has been very considerably encreased.

A letter has been received by the Board, from THE EVANGELICAL MISSIONARY SOCIETY, recently formed in the counties of Worcester and Middlesex, in which they invite from this Society, such communications, as may have a tendency to produce united and efficacious endeavours, in prosecuting the common and important designs of our respective institutions.

Such, brethren, is the summary view, which your Board of Trustees are in a situation to give of their own official doings, of the labors and success of our Missionaries, and of the general state of the Society. They regret the failure of documents for a more full and particular report. But from the general view now exhibited, and from information received from various quarters, they it feel to be their duty, on this pleasing anniversasary most gratefully to acknowledge the continued smiles of the Great Head of the Church on the Missionary interest; and devoutly to congratulate the Society on its progressive prosperity, and its brightening and animating prospects. Zion's God still reigns, and he will yet make her walls salvation, and her gates praise. Let her friends, then, not be discouraged; but with united hearts, and with augmented zeal, let them pray and labor for her prosperity and her peace.

After hearing and accepting the report of the Trustees, the Society proceeded to their annual business.

The Act of incorporation, granted to the Society by the Legislature of the Commonwealth was accepted.

The officers of the Society, elected for the present year, are as follows.

Rev. NATHANIEL EMMONS, D. D. *President.*
Rev. JACOB NORTON, *Secretary.*
Dea JOHN SIMPKINS, *Treasurer.*
The PRESIDENT, *Ex-officio,*
Rev. DANIEL HOPKINS,
SAMUEL NILES,
SAMUEL SPRING, D D.
JOHN CRANE, D. D.
SAMUEL AUSTIN, D. D.
ELIJAH PARISH, D. D.
JONATHAN STRONG,
JACOB NORTON,
SAMUEL WORCESTER,
Dea. ISAAC WARREN,
} *Trustees.*

The public exercises of the occasion were attended on the evening of the first day of the meeting, at the Old South meeting-house. The Sermon, by the Rev. Mr. Strong of Randolph was highly evangelical and animating; the assembly was respectable and solemnly attentive; and the collection for the purpose of the Society was liberal.

The first preacher for the next annual meeting is the Rev. SAMUEL WORCESTER of Salem, the second Rev. JACOB NORTON of Weymouth.

The missionaries appointed by the Board of Trustees for the present half year are Rev. JOHN SAWYER and Rev. JOTHAM SEWALL, District of Maine; Mr. DAVID SMITH, northwestern parts of New Hampshire; Mr. NAHUM FAY, western counties of New York; Rev. DANIEL EMERSON, destitute parts of Rhode Island; and, for the whole year, Rev. JOSEPH BADGER, Wyandot tribe of Indians.

An account of the funds of the Society and list of donations in our next

LITERARY INTELLIGENCE.

GREAT BRITAIN.

IMPROVEMENTS IN EDUCATION.

JOSEPH LANCASTER, of the free school, Borough Road, London, having invented, *under the blessing of Divine Providence*, a new and mechanical system of education for the use of schools, feels anxious to disseminate the knowledge of its advantages through the United Kingdom.

By this system, paradoxical as it may appear, above one thousand children may be taught and governed by one master only, at an expense now reduced to *five shillings per annum, each child;* and supposed still capable of further reduction. The average time for instruction, in reading, writing, and the elements of arithmetic, is twelve months. Among many other advantages, which distinguish this system, is a new method of teaching to read and spell; whereby one book, worth about seven shillings, will serve to teach five hundred boys, who, in the usual method, would require five hundred books, worth about twenty-five pounds. The improvement is three times greater by the new method than the old. Any boy, who can read, can teach arithmetic with the certainty of a mathematician, although he knows nothing about it himself.

The public are indebted to the Duke of Bedford and Lord Somerville, in the first instance, and to many of the Nobility, Gentry, and Clergy, for the support given to this system in London, when in its infant state. The King, the Queen, and the Royal Family, feeling with paternal goodness for the welfare and happiness of their people, have patronized by liberal annual subscriptions a design for extending the benefits of this plan to the education of ten thousand poor children.

One of the peculiar advantages of this system is, that it does not enter into any grounds of religious differences, being in itself a compendium of mechanical improvements, in themselves highly beneficial and capable of being applied to educate the poor by hundreds and thousands, at a *very small expense.* Those who may think fit to adopt this plan will find it capable of great good, in itself; and may engraft on it any system of religious instruction, which they please, *without diminishing its utility.*

It is intended to publish an abridgment of the System of Education for the benefit of the poor in Ireland. It will be executed under the inspection of the author of the original system, and *recent* improvements will be added One object of the intended publication is to enable benevolent persons to spread the knowledge of this cheap, easy, and expeditious mode of education among school masters, governors of charities, committees, and friends of the poor, in a general manner, and at the expense of a small subscription, *which is to be paid at the time of subscribing.*

A volume, which gives an account of Lancaster's system of education has been received from England, and read by a number of Gentlemen in the United States with an high degree of approbation. A school on this plan has been established in the city of New-York with pleasing success, and it promises very extensive benefits.

THE PROTESTANT DISSENTER'S GRAMMAR SCHOOL.

The plan of such a school has been formed and published in England, and measures are taken to carry the plan into execution. The object of the institution is to combine, on an extensive scale, the advantages of a classical and religious education. It is designed to qualify persons to be teachers of youth and to afford very material benefit to those, who may devote themselves to the Christian ministry.

LIST OF NEW PUBLICATIONS.

A PLATFORM OF CHURCH DISCIPLINE: gathered out of the word of God, and agreed upon by the elders and messengers of the churches assembled in the synod at Cambridge, in New-England: to be presented to the churches and General Court, for their consideration and acceptance in the Lord. The eighth month, anno 1649. Boston: Belcher & Armstrong, 12 mo. pp. 70, price 25 cents.

A Sermon, delivered, May 18th, 1808, at the ordination of the Rev Joshua Huntington, colleague pastor with the Rev. Joseph Eckley, D. D. of the church of Christ in Marlborough-Street, Boston. By Jedidiah Morse, D. D. pastor of the Congregational church in Charlestown. Boston: Belcher & Armstrong.

Quarterly catalogue of the names of the young ladies, who belong to the academy kept by Rev. Timothy Alden, jun. with explanatory notes. Number I. Boston, Central Court, xiv. May, mdcccviii. Boston: Belcher & Armstrong.

A Sermon delivered May 26, 1808, in Brattle-Street church, Boston, before the Convention of Congregational ministers of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, by Daniel Chaplin, A.M. Boston: Belcher & Armstrong.

A Sermon, delivered before the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company, in Boston, June 6, 1808, being the hundred and seventieth anniversary of their Election of Officers. By Rev. Leonard Woods, A. M. Boston: Belcher and Armstrong.

The Village Curate, a Poem, by J. Hurdis, B. D. profes sor of Poetry lished by request of the committee of in the university of Oxford. Second American edition. Newburyport: Thomas & Whipple.

An Historical Sketch of the county of Berkshire, and town of Pittsfield. written in May, 1808. By Thomas Allen, A. M. pastor of the Congregational church in Pittsfield. Boston: printed for the Author, by Belcher & Armstrong.

A Sermon preached before the Members of the Female Charitable Society of Newburyport, it being their Fifth Anniversary, May 17, 1808, by Elijah Parish, D. D. pastor of the church in Byfield. Published at the request of the Managers. Newburyport: Thomas & Whipple.

A Sermon preached before His Excellency, James Sullivan, Esq. governor; His Honor, Levi Lincoln, Esq. lieutenant-governor; the Honorable Council, of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, on the day of General Election, May 25th, 1808. By Thomas Allen, A. M. minister of the Congregational Church in Pittsfield. Boston: Adams and Rhoades.

IN THE PRESS.

The Speech of Henry Brougham, Esq. before the House of Commons, Friday, April 1, 1808, in support of the petitions from London, Liverpool and Manchester, against the Orders in Council. Taken in short-hand by A Fraser. Boston: Published by Farrand, Mallory and Co. Law Booksellers, Suffolk Buildings.

Select Miscellaneous Classics, comprising the entire works of Pope, Swift, Smollet, Addison, Goldsmith, Johnson, Sterne, and Fielding, in sixty volumes, duodecimo, to be ornamented with plates, engraved by the first American artists. This superb and valuable work is now publishing by subscription in Boston, by Messrs. Hastings, Etheridge & Bliss, on a fine vellum paper, at one dollar per volume in extra boards; and hot pressed, at one dollar and twenty-five cents. The two first volumes have already made their appearance. Too much credit cannot be given to the publishers for their undertaking and prosecuting a work of such magnitude and merit, attended with such unremitted labor and expense. The former, unquestionably, will command the interest, while the latter, we trust, will persuade the liberality of any one whose ability will permit him, to patronize merit and industry combined.

OBITUARY.

DIED at CAMBRIDGE, on Saturday the 11th instant, MRS. RUTH GANNETT, the wife of CALEB GANNETT, Esquire, Ætat. XLIII. She was a daughter of the late President STILES, whom she resembled in various intellectual and moral traits of character. Her understanding was vigorous, and her intuitive perceptions were quick and discriminating. Her imagination was lively, but it was tempered and regulated by sound judgment. Her sensibilities were strong, but they were directed and controuled by Christian principles. Under the guidance of a parent, who took delight as well in imparting, as in acquiring knowledge, she was from early life habituated to the culture of her mind; but agreeably to the precept and example of her parental instructor, she esteemed all other knowledge as of secondary importance, in comparison with divine. Early a professor of christianity, she was well established in its distinguishing principles, not merely as a system of doctrines, but as a rule of life; and while she was able to give a reason of her faith and hope, she proved the soundness of the one, and the justness of the other, by a practical conformity to the requirements of the gospel.

High was her standard of piety, but not visionary; strict her observance of christian duties, but not austere. Cheerful without levity, she gave new proof, that *the ways of wisdom are pleasantness, and her paths peace.* In social life she was engaging in her conversation and manners; adapting herself happily to the characters of those with whom she was conversant, and always uniting the useful with the agreeable. The poor were the objects of her charity; the afflicted of her sympathy. Her alms accompanied her prayers. In the relations of a Wife and a Mother, she exhibited those virtues, which rendered her a signal blessing and ornament to her family, to which she was most highly and justly endeared. She had one child only, a son, now seven years of age, who bears the name of his pious and illustrious grandfather; but, as a stepmother, she had the care and guidance of other children, whom she treated as her own, combining resolution with affection, and fidelity with tenderness. Independent in judging, and adhering to what was fit and obligatory, she took no counsel from the fashionable world, in what related to religion and morals; but pursued such a course, as was adapted to mould her children and domestics into the Christian temper and character, and to form them *to virtue and glory.* This was the object of her supreme desire, and of her most fervent prayers. Her system of education was happily adapted to attain it. Highly propitious was its influence; and the result may justly furnish perpetual encouragement to all parents, to *go and do likewise.* In *this present time* she lost not her reward. Seldom have children manifested an equal degree of filial respect and affection, with hers; or domestics, equal regard and attachment.

During a long confinement, she gave astonishing proofs of the power of religion. Under its divine influence, she sustained all the pains and distresses of a lingering disease, not with serenity merely, but with cheerfulness. Retaining the faculties of reason and speech until nearly her last moments, she was enabled and disposed daily to impart salutary and pious advice to all around her; and the attentive and interesting manner, in which it was received, furnishes just hope, that the impressions and benefit of it will never be obliterated.

In the spiritual world, as in the natural, clouds often obscure the face of heaven. Few of the children of God uninterruptedly enjoy the light of his countenance. There are seasons when they are liable to be *in heaviness, through manifold temptations.* Here was a favored instance of exception. From the time of Mrs. Gannett's entrance into her chamber, under a fixed persuasion that this would be her last sickness, she ap-

peared never to have one serious doubt respecting the safety of her spiritual state. Her cheerfulness from that time could not escape the observation of any person who saw her; but the full solution of it was not at first discovered. When her friends were at length constrained to allow, what she had uniformly wished them to believe, that her recovery was not to be expected, she *declared what God had done for her soul*, and expressed an assured hope of future glory. The origin of this assurance she distinctly and accurately traced.

It did not arise from a sudden impulse. No passage of scripture was impressed on the mind; no voice, in her sleeping or waking moments, pronounced her character or destination. Nor was it derived from a consciousness of high attainments in Christian virtue. She uniformly expressed the deepest conviction of human depravity, and of her personal unworthiness, sinfulness, and guilt; and took notice of the religious attainments of others, who, it is presumed, would gladly have received counsel from her lips, and improvement from her example.

It was an assurance gradually obtained, which, in common with all her spiritual attainments, she ascribed to divine and sovereign grace. Her prevailing impression had, for several years, been that of *confidence in God.* She had been seeking, waiting, hoping, and trusting. Her bible was the oracle, to which she daily repaired for instruction; and this pious exercise was accompanied with prayer to the Father of Lights for divine illumination and guidance. The promise, *Then shall we know, if we follow on to know the Lord*, was fulfilled. By perseverance in seeking, she *found the knowledge of God.* The additional promise was fulfilled: *If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine.* By cherishing a conscientious desire of conformity to the will of God, she obtained a deep and extensive acquaintance with the truths of scripture, and at the same time became *thoroughly furnished to all good works.* Not satisfied with a general acquaintance with scriptural doctrines, she was studious to obtain a distinct knowledge of the several parts, which compose the whole; to understand them in their order and connexion; and to perceive the symmetry and beauty, the excellence and glory, of the entire system. The peculiar doctrines of the gospel were not more thoroughly understood by her, than they were cordially embraced. The doctrine of *the cross* was to her *the power of God, and the wisdom of God.* To this she repaired, and to this she adhered, as the ark of her salvation.

Here it is that we are to look for the origin of that holy confidence, which rendered her triumphant in death. "Jesus Christ, having made atonement for sin, has promised that every penitent sinner, who believes in him, and becomes conformed to his example and laws, shall be pardoned, justified, and saved. But I find evidence of my repentance, faith in Jesus Christ, and conformity to him. I therefore am confident of my pardon, justification, and salvation."

Such was her method of reasoning; and her conclusion was not to be shaken. To the evidences of the genuineness of her faith and penitence, and of the other Christian graces, she had been sedulously attentive; and had not to *lay again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God.* Having resolved every doubt concerning the reality of religion in her own soul, she confided in the faithfulness of HIM, *who hath promised* with as much assurance as she believed the truth of her own existence.

Another process of reasoning, by which she arrived at the same conclusion, was by tracing her religion to its divine origin, and then again applying the word of promise. "God hath, by his spirit, implanted a principle of holiness in my heart. But God will never leave his work unfinished. Therefore the work, which he hath begun in me, he will perfect in glory." Here she had recourse to the great doctrines of divine election, regenerating grace, the covenant of promise, the immutability of God, the divine nature and absolute promises of Christ, and the final perseverance of the saints. In the firm belief of these truths and promises, and of her own personal interest in them, she was *confident of this very thing,*

that He, who had begun a good work in her, would perform it until the day of Jesus Christ. She was assured, that she should be *kept by the power of God, through faith to salvation.*

The Christian hope being now *an anchor to her soul, sure and stedfast,* the winds and tempests could neither agitate nor disquiet her. This hope raised her entirely above the fear of death, whose approach she uniformly regarded as that of a welcome messenger. Having with perfect composure, and with her usual discernment and prudence, made domestic arrangements, and adjusted all her temporal concerns, she calmly waited to receive the summons for her departure. She had several paroxysms of severe pain and distress, but never uttered the language of complaint or impatience. After these paroxysms, she often said, "my sufferings, I hope, will not continue to be so severe; nevertheless, Father, thy will be done." Her great concern was, *that God in all things might be glorified, through Jesus Christ.*

On the Tuesday preceding her death, she apprehended herself about to expire; and every symptom indicated approaching death. What little strength remained was exhausted in the act of giving praise and glory to God; and all vital motion apparently ceased. Every person present believed that she had actually expired, but, to the astonishment of all, respiration, together with the powers of reason and speech, shortly returned. On Friday she expressed an apprehension lest she had not glorified and praised God, at that critical moment, when she considered her *departure as at hand.* "Did I," she importunately asked. Being answered, that she did; "Have I then," she rejoined, "any thing to do but to die?" She continued to the last to speak of death with familiarity and delight. Every step she considered as tending to the termination of her pilgrimage through the wilderness; and she dwelt with sacred pleasure on the thought of reaching the banks of Jordan, and plunging into its cold waters, that she might pass over into the land of promise.* The happiness of the redeemed was a favorite subject of her contemplation, and the nearer the view, the stronger were her anticipations. Her joy was literally *unspeakable and full of glory.*

It pleased God to *fulfil all her petitions.* Her sufferings were gradually diminished, and she at length fell asleep, without a struggle. Had an infidel witnessed her exit, scarcely could he have suppressed the exclamation: *Let me die the death of this Christian, and let my last end be like her's.*

Seldom is there a more striking proof, than her dying apartment furnished, of the truth and justness of the poet's description:

The chamber where the Christian meets his fate,
Is privileg'd beyond the common walk
Of virtuous life, quite on the verge of heaven:
God waits not the last moment—owns his friends
On this side death, and points them out to men,
A lecture silent, but of sovereign power.

* *See the lines which follow, entitled,* "*The Female Pilgrim.*"

DIED. At Dedham, on the morning of the 4th July 1808, deeply lamented, that eminent statesman, and patriot, and eloquent orator, the Hon. FISHER AMES, Esq. Character in our next.

ORDAINED. In Rowley, Rev. *Joseph Merrill,* as an Evangelist.

In Branford, (Con.) Rev. *Timothy P. Gillet;* sermon from Matt. xiii. 52.

INSTALLATION. In Ashfield, Rev. *Alvan Sanderson,* over the church and congregation in that place.

POETRY.

THE FEMALE PILGRIM.

A thought, borrowed from MRS. GANNETT, was wrought into the following poetical lines, which were presented to her in the last stage of her illness. She committed them to memory, and often repeated them with a spirit and energy truly admirable.

WHITHER go'st thou, Pilgrim stranger,
Passing thro' this darksome vale?
Know'st thou not 'tis full of danger,
And will not thy courage fail?

PILGRIM, thou dost justly call me,
Wandering o'er this waste so wide;
Yet no harm will e'er befal me,
While I'm blest with such a GUIDE.

Such a guide!--no guide attends thee,
Hence for thee my fears arise;
If a Guardian Power befriends thee,
'Tis unseen by mortal eyes.

Yes, unseen, but still, believe me,
Such a Guide my steps attends;
HE'll in every strait relieve me,
HE from every harm defends.

Pilgrim! see that stream before thee,
Darkly winding through the vale;
Should its deadly waves roll o'er thee,
Would not *then* thy courage fail?

No: that stream has nothing frightful,
To its brink my steps I'll bend;
Thence to plunge will be delightful—
There my pilgrimage will end.

While I gaz'd—with speed surprising
Down the stream she plung'd from sight;
Gazing still, I saw her rising,
Like an angel, cloth'd with light.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Thelesus is in type; but is necessarily deferred to the next number.

As friends to free discussion, we are pleased with the ingenuity of *Xenos*, though we are not prepared to admit the correctness of all his reasonings and conclusions.—We think his communications would have a better effect in a detached form, and together; we therefore advise him to pursue his proposed plan. We hope his ingenuous pen will be employed on other subjects, to enrich the Panoplist.

Cephas came too late for this month. He shall hear from us soon on the subject of his communication.

Observations on the Apocrypha by N. E. are approved.

Timothy, in answer to *Candidus*, is received and shall have early attention.—The author has our thanks.

Erastus, *Z.* and the author of "Pious Meditations," are requested to continue their correspondence.

The original letters from the late Rev. John Newton and Mrs. Niles, are received, and we shall with pleasure give them early insertions in the Panoplist.

☞ The Editors and Publishers of the Panoplist and Magazine have to apologize to their patrons, for the delay of this first number, and for some errors of inadvertence, which originated in the change of the form of the publication, and which were permitted to pass, in the multiplicity of attentions and the hurry necessarily created by the new arrangements. The larger pamphlet should have been numbered, as the smaller, No. 1. Vol. I. *new series*, instead of No. 37.—Vol. IV.

The piece "*On the name Christian*" is continued from p. 507, of the Panoplist, Vol. III.